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THE NOVEL AND JOURNALISM IN MEXICO: 1890-1940

BY



WAYNE EDWARD MONTGOMERY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and  
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for  
acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Novel and Journalism in  
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partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between the novel and journalism in Mexico from 1890 to 1940. The first date corresponds to the establishment of modern journalism in Mexico, based on the North American model of impartial, succinct, and informative reporting; the second marks the beginning of a period of transition towards new trends in the novel that separate it more definitively from the realm of journalism. Although an overall view of the relationship between journalism and the novel is obtained, these fifty years are discussed with due regard for the three principal periods into which they are traditionally divided, namely, the regime of Porfirio Díaz, the Revolution, and the post-revolutionary years. In general, the two genres are examined with reference to similarities in content and form, the status of writers in whom the professions of novelist and journalist were combined, the composition of literature for publication in the newspaper, and the effects obtained by novelists who had direct recourse to newspaper reports as source material. The comparison is sufficient to indicate that, although closely related during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, they subsequently became increasingly separable, thus permitting the conclusion that in the twentieth century, even for the novel of the Mexican Revolution, the relationship between the two was never as great as has been so often maintained.



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## Introduction

References have frequently been made to the relationship between the novel and journalism in Mexico ever since the appearance of the Diario Literario in 1768. In his discussion of XIXth century literature, for example, Mario Castro Arenas stated, "es innegable que ... el periodismo influye sobre la novela en el sistema de investigación de la vida social, en el adiestramiento en la observación de la realidad y como difusor de ideas motrices en la transformación social, política, religiosa y cultural."<sup>1</sup> Critics agree almost unanimously that, in the XXth century, particularly with the novel of the Mexican Revolution, this relationship became even more pronounced. According to Jaime Delgado,

...[el estilo novelístico] encuentra mejor explicación en lo que Manuel Pedro González llama 'el desdichado matrimonio del género novela con el periodismo mexicano'. Tal coyunda había podido ser señalada ya antes de aparecer la novela de la Revolución, pero con ésta se acentúa mucho más. Se puede observar, en efecto, que la mayor parte de los novelistas mexicanos de la Revolución comparten la creación novelística con el periodismo. Pues bien: el criterio periodístico se impone con mucha frecuencia en los autores, quienes conciben y redactan



sus novelas con iguales despreocupación y improvisación con que escriben artículos o crónicas en la prensa diaria.<sup>2</sup>

In our opinion, such generalized conclusions are usually based on superficial or incomplete investigations or are arrived at without a sufficiently critical analysis of earlier evaluations; one rarely finds a critic who has conscientiously examined the exact manner in which the two genres are related. When commenting upon the interaction between the novel and journalism of the XIXth century, some focus their attention on the newspaper as the most convenient vehicle for the dissemination of literature; others judge literature as an integral aspect of newspaper content. The majority readily accept that the newspaper played an undeniably important role in the renaissance of Mexican literature after 1865, but few offer a critically justified appraisal of the continuation or transformation of this role in the latter half of the XIXth century. By the same token, although the relationship between journalism and literature, inherent in the fact that many novelists regularly contributed literary or informative articles to newspapers, or else were journalists by profession, has been recognized, an evaluation of the effects occasioned by this situation is generally lacking or is very cursory.

The analysis of conditions prevailing in the XXth century is hardly more adequate. According to generally accepted criteria, the novel of the Revolution, for example, is closely related to journalism, principally because of its





episodic nature and its apparent de-emphasis of narrative form, combined with its excessive preoccupation with society, evident in a realistic description of the Revolution. Notwithstanding, there has been little serious attempt to undertake a detailed study of the relationship between the two, and for this reason the conclusions are, at best, insubstantial, and often divergent. Accordingly, we propose to examine the relationship between the novel and journalism in Mexico, with the view to providing specific, corroborated evaluations of their interaction.

Our study is limited to an examination of the fifty years between 1890 and 1940. The first date marks the establishment of modern journalism in Mexico, a tendency initiated in the newspapers of the Reyes Spíndola, father and son. Their new trend marked the introduction of an informative, direct and objective style of reporting, a style still maintained by leading modern newspapers as the best suited to the primary function of impartially relating the news. The importance of the second date rests on the fact that by about 1940 the novel underwent a period of transition that tended to differentiate it from traditionally established forms. In the overall period of 50 years both the novel and journalism evidently developed in response to radical socio-political changes occurring in Mexico, a tendency which, although by no means unique to Mexico, contributed to the growing divergence between the two genres and the establishment of separable styles and



objectives. Through our assessment of the correlation between journalism and the novel, we shall endeavour to evaluate not only the period from 1890 to 1940 as a whole, but also the three homogeneous periods into which Mexican history of those years is traditionally divided, namely, the regime of Porfirio Díaz, the Revolution, and the post-revolutionary era.

In selecting the primary sources for this study, emphasis was placed on examining the most representative elements of both genres while maintaining a kind of balance between the two sources from the point of view of their place of origin. Since the majority of the novelists discussed lived or worked at some time in the capital, the only possible criterion of selection with respect to the novels was to examine the widest and most representative spectrum of works by both well known and lesser known authors. In reality, the only limitation accepted was that imposed by the unavailability of a few novels. The dailies of Mexico City were the primary source among the newspapers, since these were the most representative of the Mexican press at that time, with a format best reflecting the fundamental characteristics of established reporting. Nonetheless, in order to complete the spectrum we also consulted dailies of important cities such as Guadalajara and Vera Cruz, as well as various weeklies and magazines of major, national importance.<sup>3</sup>

Our study is developed in six chapters. In the first





the characteristics of the novel and journalism are discussed in order to establish the criteria upon which to base a comparison. In Chapter II we outline the progress of journalism in Mexico, relating it to the development of Mexican literature in order to provide the historical background against which to assess the relationship of the two forms in the period between 1890 and 1940. Chapter III is an examination of the last two decades of the Porfirista age when novelists generally belonged to one of two categories, pro-government 'literati', or liberal oppositionists. Chapter IV contains an analysis of novels written between 1910 and 1940, with particular concentration on the novel of the Revolution. In Chapter V we study the 'cristero' novel, in some respects an offshoot of the novel of the Revolution but differentiated by its reactionary political point of view and its relatively traditional style. Finally, in Chapter VI, a brief study of the novel after 1940 is undertaken in order to indicate the ways in which tendencies predominant before this date prevail or are transformed.

The emphasis of the study, particularly in chapters containing analysis of the interaction between the novel and journalism, is placed on the influence of the newspaper on the novel. Differing structural forms and literary techniques are therefore considered, as well as the exploitation of various narrative forms, such as informative recounting, narration for the sole purpose of entertaining,



and didacticism. In evaluating similarities of content we take into account the writer's particular focus on society as well as his examination of Mexican history and culture. We investigate the effects obtained in the novels of writers who combined the professions of journalist and novelists; we also examine the circumstances under which novels were published in newspapers, and, conversely, the manner in which novelists occasionally had recourse to the newspaper for passages with which to develop or enhance the plot of a novel. In conclusion, it is intended to indicate, more explicitly than has been done in previous criticism, the nature of the relationship between the novel and journalism, and to assess prevailing critical evaluations of the novel of the period from 1890 to 1940.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Mario Castro Arenas, El periodismo y la novela contemporánea (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1969), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>Jaime Delgado, "La novela mejicana de la Revolución", Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, Vol. XXI, No. 61, January, 1955, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>For a complete list of the newspapers and novels consulted refer to our bibliography of primary sources.





## I

### The Novel and Journalism

At one time, the novel and journalism were considered to be closely related forms, an opinion favoured by a number of factors. As a form of creative, personal prose, journalism was often the product of writers who also wrote novels; at the same time, by its very nature, the newspaper was often the most adequately suited vehicle for the dissemination of literature. José Acosta Montoro, summarizing newspaper development prior to the XXth century, attested, "El mundo del periodismo, en sus orígenes y en las épocas de su primer desarrollo, fue el mundo de la literatura. Las noticias, que constituyen el centro de la información que cada día ofrecen los periódicos tenían que ser 'llenados' con relatos, comentarios, artículos...".<sup>1</sup> Thomas Escott quoted various authorities of the XIXth century to illustrate the prevalent view that journalism was merely a branch of literature:

Without literary talent of a various and high order, no journal can, he [Thomas de Quincey] said, now hold its own. This claim for the newspaper to be considered as much a part and parcel of literature as the book was not advanced by De Quincey for the first time; it had been asserted or assumed by all the prose



masters of the Georgian age.... Journalism, said James Hannay, like occasional verse or the lighter department of 'belles lettres' generally is but a branch of literature as the parent trunk.<sup>2</sup>

Walter Williams and Frank Martin, both American professors of journalism, corroborated the persistence of this relationship until the early years of the XXth century, most notably in what they called 'better journalism', which blended the description of reality with subjective interpretation: "The journalist is creator, not merely carpenter and joiner. The highest journalism does not give a photograph but a portrait of life."<sup>3</sup> Professor Williams elaborated further on this point in a lecture given at the Universidad Nacional de México in 1926: "Journalism is a profession closely akin to literature. It is both recording and creating. It records news, the events of the day, and through interpretation and comment thereupon approaches literature."<sup>4</sup>

These critics all directed their remarks to journalism of the XIXth and early XXth centuries, since, during that period, the prevailing concept demanded that journalists use a creative style and express personal views freely. As such, their criteria did not coincide with those of the modern newspaper. In the modern era, as Northrop Frye has affirmed, journalism, with its eminently documentary nature, has disassociated itself from literature:

In 'epos', where the poet faces his audience, we have a 'mimesis' of direct speech. 'Epos' and fiction first take the form of scripture





and myth, then of traditional tales, then of narrative and didactic poetry, including the epic proper, and of oratorical prose, then of novels and other written forms. As we progress historically through the five modes, fiction increasingly overshadows 'epos', and as it does, the mimesis of direct address changes to a mimesis of assertive writing. This in its turn, with the extremes of documentary or didactic prose, becomes actual assertion, and so passes out of literature.<sup>5</sup>

Not all contemporary critics concur. Archibald MacLeish remarked on the interaction of journalism and the novel in aspects of form:

No one would claim that the usual news story is a work of art, at least in the ordinary sense of that term. But no one would deny either that great works of journalism exist and that when they exist they exist within a discipline of their own--a discipline that reveals itself as the disciplines of art always reveal themselves, in form.... The recognition that the newspaper story or the magazine article is capable of form comparable to the great form of fiction is as just as it is belated.<sup>6</sup>

According to MacLeish, the simple, straightforward form adopted in news reports is akin to art whenever it embodies some theme or topic of aesthetic merit and seeks to establish universal, humanist values, elements common to all literature.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, when the news information is written in refined prose and expresses subjective attitudes, it also can be an artistic form of journalism.

Not all critics have emphasized the more speculative aspects of the relationship. Enrico Falqui, adopting a pragmatic point of view, examined the function of literature within journalism and specified the conditions which



determine the quantity and quality of literary content of any newspaper.<sup>8</sup> As variables to be taken into account, he listed:

- a) the political affiliation of the newspaper;
- b) the size of the city in which the newspaper was published;
- c) the preferences of the editor;
- d) the type of reader to which the newspaper was directed;
- e) the financial resources of the publication, which guarantee its independence and mitigate purely economic concerns;
- f) the political atmosphere, and the urgency of dissemination of information.

Perhaps the critic who has best classified the relationships between the two genres is Edgardo Ríos.<sup>9</sup> He divided newspaper style into four principal classifications:

- a) "El informativo", which stresses the direct, objective recounting of daily news. Its principal forms are daily news stories, cablegrammes, interviews, social notes and political reportage.
- b) "El explicativo", written to provide an enumeration of the causes and effects of events, to explain their significance and to compare them to other, relevant happenings in the present or past. Its style is characterized



by a mixture of objective reporting and subjective evaluation.

c) "Periodismo de opinión", a form best illustrated by the editorial page. Its focus is essentially subjective since the writer seeks to interpret events and to direct his readers' opinions.

d) "Periodismo ameno", which he defined as "cualquier artículo...que se escriba con el fin de entretener y para lo cual, basándose en la noticia, utilice también la ficción y el lenguaje indirecto.... El artículo de interés humano es una de sus formas características" (p. 30).

Ríos then evaluated the approximation of journalism to literature on the basis of these four styles. In his assessment, informative and explanatory journalism are not related to literature because their essence precludes the use of fiction, imaginative language, and aesthetic design. Generally speaking, his summation is valid, although, in our view, there is a certain opportunity for creative style and subjective evaluation in 'explanatory journalism' whenever the writer develops his opinions according to personal criteria. In Ríos' view, 'journalism of opinion' is somewhat closer to literature, in particular the essay ('literature of opinion'), since both are characterized by personal styles, indirect language and a pyramidal structure whereby





the writer takes a general statement as a point of departure and leads to a specific conclusion. Nevertheless, Ríos concludes that the greatest opportunity for a relationship between literature and journalism is to be found in 'periodismo ameno', since this facet of the newspaper provides the possibility of fiction, rhetorical language and aesthetic intent.

Any assessment of the interaction between the two forms must also take into account the possible relationship between the novel, history and journalism. It is natural that numerous points of contact exist between history and journalism, since both are essentially the chronicling of verifiable events. Newspaper reportage, as an historical document, is one of the prime sources for the historian, and, on this basis, Archibald MacLeish accepted the two as facets of the same genre: "Journalism is the stepchild of history--if it is not, indeed, its foster father" ("Poetry and Journalism", p. 26). This opinion was hardly original; a century earlier, the Mexican journalist and historian Francisco Zarco wrote:

La prosa periódica ha llegado a tomar el vuelo y a abarcar de tal modo la vitalidad de las naciones, que como una especie de daguerrotipo de lo presente tiene cierto aspecto de importancia para la posteridad.... Las publicaciones de la prensa comienzan a ser, para los historiadores, una fuente inagotable que les permite reconstruir con toda exactitud las épocas posteriores al desarrollo del periodismo.<sup>40</sup>

The two main components of journalism, the news report and



the editorial, both have parallel forms in historical writing. The report corresponds to the historian's impersonal documentation of events, while his interpretation of these episodes approximates the editorial page of the newspaper. Both journalism and history are equally susceptible to the dangers of bias and the manipulation of information, since writers given to factional preconceptions cannot fulfil their role as objective chroniclers. Yet, it must be noted that the above comparison of these forms is superficial. The similarities among them do not always indicate a categorical interaction between the two genres, nor detract from their status as separable entities. There is an inherent distinction between history 'per se' as an objective analysis of past events, and the newspaper's contemporaneous recording of the same reality, particularly when the journalist is censored or inhibited by social and political pressures. Moreover, the newspaper is not limited to the reporting of historically relevant facts, since it has other objectives to satisfy as well. History, for its part, normally consists of a broader and more penetrating investigation than that possible within the limited parameters of journalism.

Like the historian, the novelist can provide a deeper analysis of his material. He is not limited by constraints of space and factual conciseness. At times, the novelist even assumes the role of historian, for, as Alfonso Reyes indicated, authors write within the context of their own





historical period:

Hay una historicidad latente en la novela, relacionada con el tipo obvio. Y en ella ... entraña una referencia más o menos expresa o tácita al tiempo y al espacio (época y lugar), a la circunstancia social (historicidad específica). Todo autor escribe desde aquella intersección de líneas históricas que lleva como marca en la frente.<sup>11</sup>

When a novelist constructs his narrative on the basis of verifiable facts and historical events, the novel becomes an historical work in as much as it is an attempt to re-create a certain historical period. Notwithstanding, there are fundamental differences separating the novel from history: the historian must limit his narration and commentary to documented events and data, while the novelist enjoys artistic and imaginative liberty.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, the historian and the novelist may complement each other and, together, may even realize a more complete vision of eras and events; nonetheless, their fundamental objectives remain quite distinct.

Although we have noted a general relationship between literature and journalism, and hence between the newspaper and the novel, it is necessary to analyse the essential characteristics of both genres, and to arrive at a clear understanding of their fundamental differences, in order that we may discuss the relationship between the novel and journalism in Mexico more clearly. The novel does not lend



itself easily to categorical definitions, for every novelist has his own concept of what a novel should be and how it should be written. This problem has long plagued literary critics as they attempted to reconcile their views of the novel with the diversity of its content and the variability of its form.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the most practical approach for us will be to seek an approximate definition which, while adequate to the purpose, will also enable us to detail the characteristics that distinguish the novel from journalism.

The possibilities of form in the novel are profuse, from the simple, direct, linear narration that is commonly associated with conventional novels such as detective and adventure stories, to the complex structures of psychological novels, existential introspection, and novels of the absurd. The intrinsic intent of a novel will express the author's inner response to the motives that initiated his creative processes; Jean-Charles Falardeau listed some of these as "acceptation, cri, révolte, sublimation ou mythologique".<sup>14</sup> The novelist's extrinsic objectives are also important, and encompass such factors as his desire to entertain, instruct or correct his reader. Any definition of the genre must also recognize that novel writing is not a rigid, static art, but is rather a reflection of its historical time and of prevailing literary precepts and popular tastes. In spite of these variants, it is still possible to denote four basic elements which must be present in any prose work in order for it to be classified as a





novel. These are: a literary style, aesthetic intent, an element of fiction, and a relationship with reality.

Literary style refers to the novelist's recourse to artistic and creative techniques of linguistic expression and narrative structure. The function of such elements and their importance within any novel vary from one writer to another, depending on his aesthetic purpose, his mastery of form, the nature of his material, and the type of public for whom he writes. To a large degree, stylistic factors are integrally related to the novelist's intent to produce a worthwhile work of art. He therefore takes his prose beyond the constraining, stylistic limits of historical recounting and newspaper reportage, to attain the full potential of artistic expression and to create a fuller awareness of the reality he presents. Obviously, such aims are not obtained in the same manner, nor with the same effectiveness, by every writer; but they are indispensable elements of any novel, and serve as fundamental criteria for judging its final, literary merit.

Narrative fiction is primarily the product of the writer's imagination. Unlike the historian and the journalist, the novelist is free to develop his story and even to interpret actual happenings according to his own concepts and artistic or humanist views. On this basis, there is a constant interplay between reality, as it is observed in every day life, and the sense of reality that is ultimately conveyed through a novel as the result of the





transformations produced by the writer's imagination. Jean-Charles Falardeau explained:

[Le roman] est une création spécifique, à partir d'éléments que l'écrivain trouve en lui-même et autour de lui. Le romancier invente des êtres et les lance dans des aventures humaines. Il pousse jusqu'à leurs limites des destinées dont il a trouvé des indices dans son expérience. Il rend explicite ce qu'il a vu comme latent; il décrit comme vraisemblable ce qu'il a pressenti comme possible; il offre comme organisé ce qu'il a observé comme diffus. (Notre société et son roman, p. 75)

Because the novelist creates his own world, or offers an indirect representation of actual life, the reality in a novel is often more true from the point of view of credibility than from that of fact. That is to say that what may appear to be a real world is, in fact, formulated within the novelist's imagination and is controlled by the conventions that he institutes in it. When this new world is made to seem plausible, and when the novelist is himself faithful to the rules that govern its functioning, he is able to convince the reader to suspend his conventional concept of reality and to accept voluntarily that established in the novel.

Although it would be difficult to conceive a novel that had no foundation or primary source in reality, the degree and manner in which the fictitious and real worlds are integrated vary with the novelist's use of imaginative elements and his purpose in composing the work. As a consequence, there is a fundamental role for fiction and



reality to play in any definition of the novel. Certainly, the most immediate reflection of reality is that of daily experience and existence, but, as John Brushwood asserts, that is not all:

The novel is particularly capable of expressing the reality of a nation, because of its ability to encompass both visible reality and the elements of reality that are not seen. At its best the novel explores the inner reality that is the deeper part of existing circumstance, and also the dreams that transcend the visible in a different direction. It is able to probe in both directions without mitigating its own awareness, or the reader's awareness of visible circumstance.<sup>15</sup>

Evidently, the degree of reality communicated in any novel will accord with the intentions, the skill and the artistic sensibility of the author. However, there exist opposing views on what constitutes a valid interplay of fiction and actuality. On the one hand, there are writers who champion the precept of art for art's sake, rejecting the tenet that the novel provide a faithful duplication of factual reality in favour of the principle of poetic and artistic purity as a means of providing escape from a mundane existence. On the other hand are the novelists committed to making literature an instrument of social and political struggle. Although these novels are rooted firmly in daily reality, they are compromised by the writer's overt dedication to political and social ideologies. Such novelists, as biased allies of society, depict reality from a partisan perspective and channel all narrative resources to fostering their thesis, even when it is to the detriment of aesthetic and literary





considerations. As a consequence, their compositions are, at best, ideological arguments masquerading as prose narratives, and, at worst, monotonous, inopportune essays lacking in artistic merit and general interest. Between these two extremes is a reasonable medium which provides a basis for insuring a balanced synthesis of the interaction between fiction and reality. Fernando Alegría aptly applied this notion to literature: "Para [el artista] el acto de creación es una transmutación de la vida al orden trascendente de la realidad estética, y en ese acto intenta dar la imagen del duelo decisivo que fue su enfrentamiento al mundo."<sup>16</sup> It is this concept of the presentation of reality, in conjunction with the elements of fiction, aesthetic intent and literary style, which constitute the essence of novel writing and which will permit us to distinguish the novel from journalism.

Journalism has been subjected to the same form of analysis as the novel, but, as with the latter, without giving rise to any absolute definition. Nonetheless, all journalism, regardless of its status, must fulfil two basic requirements. It must be published regularly, whether on a daily, a weekly or a monthly basis, and it must inform the readers on current events. Journalism itself can be divided into two fundamental classifications, the newspaper and the magazine. Broadly speaking, newspapers appear with greater frequency, usually daily or weekly, and provide readers with prompt information on the latest developments. Their reports are usually designed to meet the interests of the specific



public to which they are addressed, and to provide particular information on international or national events. Characteristically, the news accounts in first-rate publications are direct, objective, informative, well written, and truthfully substantiated; those of local and sensationalist newspapers often adopt a more subjective and personal stance, focusing on events of regional consequence and providing greater space for human interest stories. By contrast, magazines generally appear at less frequent intervals, usually as weeklies or monthlies, and contributors have more time to write professional, investigative articles and to produce a greater depth of analysis and critical commentary. However, like the newspapers, magazines are normally classified according to their content and thematic focus, for instance, as news magazines, literary reviews or scientific publications.<sup>17</sup>

Regino Hernández Llergo, editor of the news magazine Impacto, compared the two journalistic forms in order to point out their particular characteristics:

<u>newspaper</u>	<u>magazine</u>
-it is discarded after being read;	-its issues are preserved as a collection;
-its news items tend to be more superficial;	-the articles investigate suitable topics, assessing all its aspects and reaching suitable conclusions;
-its articles are written with greater spontaneity and less stylistic polish;	-the contributor demonstrates a more professional attitude and greater care in composition;
-the importance of a newspaper is generally limited to the national	-magazines tend to achieve a more international





arena.

recognition.

However, Hernández Llergo was quick to add that such differences were not radical, but rather complementary facets of an essentially cohesive form.<sup>18</sup>

The information in all journalism is communicated by three fundamental forms. The first of these, as the nucleus of any newspaper, is the news article or report:

¿Qué es el reportaje? Académicamente, es una información periodística o cinematográfica sobre una persona o materia determinada.... Condensación e interpretación son condiciones del reportaje, en que el periodista pretende narrar las diversas circunstancias que modelan un determinado hecho humano, con participación de la labor del hombre, con su presencia, de modo que al mismo tiempo que informe sea capaz de influir sobre la personalidad del lector.

El reportero tiene una función fundamental: comunicar. (José Acosta Montoro, Periodismo y literatura, pp. 126 and 127)

Because the prime function of reporting is to summarize news in a direct, clear manner, journalists must develop a concise, impersonal style of writing.<sup>19</sup> Such a style was already prevalent in the leading European and North American newspapers before the second half of the XIXth century, but it was not established in Mexican journalism until initiated by Rafael Reyes Spíndola in 1896. Because these characteristics were advanced by Reyes Spíndola as indispensable to modern, worthwhile reportage, and were subsequently accepted as the standard of sound journalism in Mexico, we shall acknowledge them as fundamental to our evaluation of newspaper style and essential to our assessment of the relationship between journalism and the novel.





The second component of informative journalism is the editorial. Unlike the news reporter, the editorialist is not rigidly limited with regard to his style or thematic perspective, but can adopt a philosophic or evaluative attitude and offer personal and critical observations. Accordingly, the editorial offers a scope for creative writing not found in the other news elements. The essential distinction between reportage and this section of the newspaper is one of function: "Y cuando algo, por rara excepción, no puede reducirse a términos sencillos para que cuando menos un considerable grupo de lectores lo entienda, deja de ser noticia. Sólo en la página editorial hay márgenes más amplios."<sup>20</sup> Any discussion of the ultimate significance of events, or of their causes and effects, must be left, therefore, to the editorialist; such elements, appearing in the news columns, would only reduce the effectiveness of the newspaper's primary role and bring into question the accuracy of the information. In spite of the fact that the editorial page has a limited appeal within the context of the newspaper (it has been estimated that less than 20 per cent of the readers give it more than a cursory glance) it continues to have an important function. In fact, Walter Williams and Frank Martin maintain that it is impossible to have quality journalism without editorial comment:

The presentation of the news makes necessary interpretation of the news and comment upon it. Uninterpreted news would make a newspaper that is merely gossip. The editorial page and policy supplement but do not supplant the news pages and the news. Here journalism becomes in truest sense the profession of the interpreter. (The Practice



of Journalism, p. 20)

Williams and Martin subsequently analyzed the attributes of good editorialist writing in order to summarize its basic characteristics:

- a) it must be simple and clear;
  - b) the first sentence must catch the reader's attention;
  - c) it is better that the writer use a personal style;
  - d) the style must suit the theme;
  - e) the material must be expressed with absolute clarity;
  - f) content is more important than linguistic techniques;
  - g) the content must be accurate;
  - h) a relatively loose grammatical style is more forceful and attracts greater attention;
  - i) the editorial must elicit a reaction from the reader, but never alienate him;
  - j) the author cannot hide behind a shield of anonymity.
- (pp. 46-47)

It is obvious from these characteristics that the subjective and critical essence of the editorial gives it its own identity within journalism, while its marked emphasis on informative clarity attests to the inherent relationship between editorial comment and news reporting.<sup>21</sup>

The third principal element in this group is the interview. In the newspaper, it is usually developed in one of two ways, in the form of either a news report or an editorial. In the first instance, the comments of the person interviewed are carefully arranged to provide maximum effect and meaning as





news information; in the second, the interviewer may report the conversation in a more subjective manner, highlighting personal opinions and abstract implications. Yet, whatever the method, the objective of the interviewer, like that of the reporter and the editorialist, is to provide a clear and direct account of some newsworthy event, or, as F. Ibarra de Anda stated, "de presentar el asunto en forma concisa y clara, accesible a la mayoría del público lector" (*El periodismo en México*, p. 29).<sup>22</sup>

Although the best journalism is judged by its ability to inform objectively and impartially, not even the leading newspapers can avoid a certain amount of compromise in current political and social concerns. Indeed, A. Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro viewed political awareness as an essential factor of any newspaper of importance:

Periodista verdadero es aquel que cumple con su trabajo, vigilado por el tirano, acechado por la muerte. Como si viviera el último día, vuelca en sus páginas las reservas de su genio. Por eso no ha de parecernos extraño que las mejores páginas escritas en América sean páginas políticas.<sup>23</sup>

Francisco Zarco had offered a timely confirmation of this opinion in 1861 with the reappearance of *El Siglo XIX*: "Un periódico debe tocar siempre la cuestión del día sin esquivarla por nimias consideraciones, pues faltaría á su deber si quisiera en momentos críticos eludir la responsabilidad moral de su opinión" (*El Siglo XIX*, January 15, 1861, p. 1). However, any social commitment must respect the functional limits of creditable journalism, and maintain a suitable balance between collective compromise and the newspaper's duty to provide an



impersonal account of current happenings.

Information is not the only function of journalism. By almost unanimous accord critics attribute to it the duty to influence and entertain as well. As we have stated, the informative aspect derives from reporting actual occurrences to an anonymous public; through such information, the newspaper influences the readers, in as much as these news accounts elicit a response and shape public opinion. The entertainment factor is provided in two ways. The reader's interest can be focused on informative reportage and stimulating comment on actual events. At the same time, other sections of the newspapers are designed specifically to entertain, as is the case with crossword puzzles, comic strips and special interest sections. Thus, in the words of Acosta Montoro, "el periodismo incluye comunicación por esencia; información por necesidad; formación por deseo de orientar; entretenimiento por naturaleza; y todos ellos dentro de unas áreas envolventes que incluyen estilo, técnica y presentación adecuada" (Periodismo y literatura, p. 54).

Having enumerated the elements and functions of journalism, it remains to formulate the criteria that will permit us to judge the reliability and excellence of any newspaper. Numerous critics have expressed their views on this subject, among them José Martí, who was of the opinion that, ideally, journalism would consist of a fitting combination of utilitarian and aesthetic factors, appealing to all readers:

[El periodismo] debe decir lo que a todos conviene y no dejar de decir nada que a alguien pueda convenir. Que todos encuentren en el diario





lo que pueden necesitar saber. Y decirlo con un lenguaje especial para cada especie, escribiendo en todos los géneros ... desdenando lo inútil y atendiendo siempre lo útil elegantemente. Que un periódico sea literario no depende de que se vierta en él mucha literatura, sino que se escriba literariamente todo. El periodista ha de estar siempre como los correos antiguos; con el caballo enjaezado, la fusta en la mano y la espuela en el tacón. Al menor accidente, debe saltar sobre la silla, sacudir la fusta y echar a escape el caballo para salir pronto y para que nadie llegue antes que él. Debe, extractando un libro, facilitar su lectura a los pobres de tiempo, o de voluntad o de dinero. Hacer asistir a los teatros, alineada y juiciosa revista, a los pobres y a los perezosos. Debe desobedecer los apetitos del bien personal, y atender imparcialmente al bien público. Debe ser coqueta para seducir, catedrático para explicar, filósofo para mejorar, pilluelo para penetrar, guerrero para combatir. Debe ser útil, sano, elegante, oportuno, valiente. En cada artículo debe verse la mano enguantada que lo escribe, y los labios sin mancha que lo dictan. No hay cetro mejor que un buen periódico. (Quoted by A. Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro, Periodismo y periodistas de Hispano América, pp. 143-144)

His concepts are most relevant when applied to XIXth century journalism, when editorial comment and personal opinion usurped the function of simple, objective reporting. Likewise, elegant style and literary elements played an important role at that time, since newspapers regularly published excerpts of literary works and stressed refined prose as a standard part of daily publication.

Other critics, notably Fortino Ibarra de Anda and Salvador Borrego, placed greater emphasis on the social duty of the newspaper. Accordingly, Ibarra de Anda defined journalism as "...el arte de educar a las multitudes para [sic] leer, pensar y juzgar sobre sucesos contemporáneos" (El periodismo en México,





p. 30).<sup>24</sup> Although such academic objectives are laudable, they are, in fact, impractical for a number of reasons. The ordinary reader seldom applies himself to a conscientious analysis of news reports, and only rarely reads related editorial comments. Conversely, newspaper editors do not concentrate their efforts on social indoctrination, but on the gathering of news and suitable economic returns for the publisher.

Archibald MacLeish maintained a more humanistic concept in defining worthwhile journalism, judging it according to its ability to focus on human experience and to provide a meaningful assessment of man and his actions.<sup>25</sup> That, in MacLeish's opinion, should provide the guiding precepts for all good journalism. In his discussion of the same theme, Regino Hernández Llergo detailed purely pragmatic criteria as a basis of appraisal of all creditable journalism. The characteristics he demanded were professionalism of style, periodic appearance and extensive circulation ("También las revistas son parte del periodismo nacional", Impacto, December 18, 1975). However, in our view, it is Frank Bond, of all the critics, who has most effectively synthesized the essential attributes of any newspaper of merit. In his judgement, a newspaper must be independent, neither serving nor controlled by private or vested interests; it must report impartially; its news articles must be precise and objective; it must be reputable, with a sense of responsibility; and, finally, it must be informative.<sup>26</sup> With these six points as a basis, we would add a number of further requisites. The newspaper must recount not only the most



important events of the day, but also other facts of special interest to its readers; and, additionally, it must demonstrate a professional attitude, both in the selection of content and in the final editing of its material.<sup>27</sup> With these criteria as a basis, it is possible to examine a newspaper and assess its relative merit.

Having established a fundamental notion of the characteristics of the novel and journalism, it is now necessary to compare the two in order to evaluate specific differences and similarities. The major distinction is, doubtless, the most obvious one: the journalist is bound to recount actual, daily events, while the novelist is free to develop his own concept of reality as conceived in his imagination and enhanced by an appropriate literary style and aesthetic purpose. Thus, in the judgement of Frank Bond, "La diferencia fundamental parece ser el 'propósito' del escritor. El autor expresa sus propios pensamientos y su propia experiencia; el periodista expresa los pensamientos y la experiencia de la población. La literatura puede ser eterna: el periodismo debe ser oportuno" (Introducción al periodismo, p. 29). There is another distinction inherent in the way in which either writer confronts his material. The journalist's focus on truth, social developments and historical contemporaneity may parallel the novelist's thematic study, but the novel, as a branch of literature, provides a broader scope of presentation: "Literature may have life, reality, experience,





nature, imaginative truth, social conditions or what you will for its 'content'; but literature itself is not made of these things" (Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 97). The extra, unique quality indicated by Frye derives primarily from the manner in which the novelist transforms his view of the world into an artistic product existing independently of its inspiration. Frequently, this new reality is an abstraction of the novelist's confrontation with human experiences and emotions, and a reflection of his desire to corroborate a more universal truth than that which one might derive from the factual reports of the newspaper. On this basis, journalism tends to be quantitative and scientific, whereas the novel is qualitative and subjective. It is with this in mind that A. MacLeish remarked on the difference in intent between the two genres: "The purpose in one case [journalism] may merely be to make [human experience] comprehensible to human curiosity whereas the purpose in the other [artistic creation] is very evidently to reach the human intelligence at its most perceptive and most alive" ("Poetry and Journalism". p. 31).

The novel and the newspaper are also characterized by linguistic differences. The journalist must use a clear, suitable language in order to communicate with the majority of his public. Accordingly, his accounts of events and facts are developed on the basis of verbs, especially those denoting actions; the past tense is used to describe happenings, while comments and evaluations are generally elaborated in the present. By contrast, the novelist emphasizes nouns and



adjectives, exploiting all verb tenses for maximum narrative effect. He is also able to take full advantage of literary techniques such as dialogue and monologue in order to elaborate his themes and synthesize abstract ideas; such devices, however, have no place in objective reporting.

These differences in linguistic aspects, coupled with the fundamental contrasts in objectives and the presentation of reality, clearly create an essential dissimilarity between the novel and journalism, even when they function in close accord. It is not surprising, therefore, that the two forms evolve even more distinctively when either is exercised according to the full potential of its functions and precepts. The changes effected by Rafael Reyes Spíndola at the end of the XIXth century, effectively establishing new conventions and criteria for Mexican journalism, provided a relatively constant model for good, news reporting and a standard gauge for evaluating journalistic style within Mexico. On the other hand, novelistic style and the methods of reflecting reality within the novel underwent a marked evolution between 1890 and the midpoint of the present century. Prose fiction of the last decades of the XIXth century was predominated by the realist and naturalist movements. The novelists of these tendencies sought, theoretically, to record their objective and scientific observations of social reality, portraying a chronological sequence of causes and effects in accordance with Zola's principle of presenting 'a slice of life'. However, their narratives, although depicting the essential conditions of their





era, were never the impersonal summaries they were purported to be, since the novelists were never able, nor conscientiously wished, to eliminate their subjective, evaluative compromise with society. The critical social and political changes of the first decades of the XXth century intensified this aspect of subjective, partisan commitment, so that prose fiction continued to present a personal assessment of reality. Mario Castro Arenas summarized these distinctions between the methods of presentation in the two genres in that period:

En mayor o menor grado, la novela del pasado siglo nos sitúa ante ejemplos constantes de novelistas que investigaron la realidad--no, por cierto, en rígido sentido maniqueo de los naturalistas y los realistas del actual siglo--en busca de episodios y criaturas reales que convinieran a sus planes narrativos. Así actuaron Flaubert, Dickens, Gogol, Tolstoi, Dostoiewski, Zola, Maupassant y otros. La búsqueda de la realidad entendida como "verdad social" reaparece este siglo, pero desdichadamente revestida de dirigismo o insuflada negativamente por la pasión política unilateral. Pero, malogrados los excesos de la novela, el periodismo mantiene su presencia en tanto que "actualismo" y "realismo" pueden ser conceptos sinónimos.<sup>28</sup>

This was not the only stylistic divergence. The avant garde literary movements of the XXth century heightened the focus on purely literary creativity and further reduced the area of contact between the novel and journalism.

Narrative structure also provides an important distinction between the two modes. The novel, by its nature, demands some sort of plot development. Formerly, novelists provided this through ordered, lineal narrations, and recounted complete stories; however, in more modern times this formula has been





altered through stylistic innovations, such as flashbacks, or supplanted by thematic factors, as happens, for example, in the psychological novel. By contrast, news reports and commentaries renounce any concept of plot as detrimental to informative directness. Accordingly, newspaper articles are structured as inverted pyramids, providing the important information immediately and following with the less relevant facts. Conversely, the plot structure of almost all novels is founded on the formula of a pyramidal development, building to a climax of suspense and interest.

El novelista y el argumentista de cine, en la mayoría de los casos, tienen la necesidad de ir despertando y avivando el interés del lector o espectador, por lo cual le ocultan celosamente cuál va a ser el desenlace, a fin de que la obra no pierda uno de sus principales elementos de interés.

Pero la información periodística no necesita esos recursos. Por el contrario, lo que en la novela es virtud, en la información del periódico es gravísimo defecto. Hay que decir, en las primeras líneas, que ocurrió y por qué. Es necesario presentar claramente, desde el principio, cuál es el significado del hecho.

Después, en orden descendente, van relatándose los datos de menor importancia, los complementarios y los accesorios, hasta terminar con los que tengan menor interés o significado. (Salvador Borrego, Periodismo trascendente, p. 15)

Another element of dissimilarity between the two genres, namely graphic depiction, is a characteristic unique to journalism. Newspapers make frequent use of photographs and illustrations as a facet of reportage to create immediate, explicit effects and to enhance the informative aspect of its



material. The novelist does not enjoy the same opportunity, but must rely on his command of language and the reader's imaginative ability to produce the appropriate images and impressions. Even in the case of illustrated novels, the drawings are usually those of a professional illustrator who, like any reader, draws his inspiration from his own reading of the text.

The problem of differentiating between journalism and the novel in the modern era<sup>29</sup> is negligible since, as a rule, both prose forms have functioned independently of one another. However, in the XIXth and the early part of the XXth centuries, when newspapers provided novelists with the most apt means of publication and livelihood, circumstances were quite different. As a result, frequent controversies have arisen concerning the extent of the professional relationship between the two forms, and of the worth of the journalist as a writer. Critics readily admit that both modes offer possibilities for linguistic merit, but support the notion of formal distinctions. H. W. Boynton professed that "the [unsuccessful] author might, perhaps, have been useful in some more practical way--for instance, in journalism which offers a respectable maintenance, at least, to the possessor of verbal talent" (Journalism and Literature, p. 5), but he qualified this by adding, "one does not fit himself for journalism by failing in literature, any more than one fits himself for literature by failing in journalism" (p. 22). Fortino Ibarra de Anda was more specific in his criticism, and enumerated characteristics of journalistic prose that, in





his opinion, made it inferior to novel writing:

Es verdad que los periódicos salen con muy mala literatura; mas no por incapacidad de quienes los escriben, sino por la festinación con que tienen que desempeñar su labor y también porque el diarismo está destinado a la gran masa del público, que siempre es de cultura y de mentalidad muy medianas; escribir en estilo clásico para un diario, sería inútil y hasta perjudicial para la generalidad de los lectores de periódicos de información. (*El periodismo en México*, pp. 19-20)<sup>30</sup>

Despite Ibarra de Anda's commentary, one must acknowledge that journalists often require the same skills and entertain the same motives as novelists. Editorial writers and news commentators must demonstrate a good style and judicious critical awareness, while any reporter who wishes to be considered a good writer must develop his mastery of a clear, concise prose, and the ability to examine and evaluate daily reality within an ordered and equitable perspective. Historically, this professional relationship has existed for many years and journalism has provided a large number of novelists with their fundamental training in writing.<sup>31</sup> As a result, Francisco J. Avila concluded that, although there was a 'functional' difference between the novelist and journalist, their works were integral and complementary facets of prose production.<sup>32</sup> However, the evaluation did not provide any conclusions on the worth of journalists as writers. In a biting assessment of journalism, the Mexican critic Victoriano Agüeros condemned it as "el mayor enemigo de la buena literatura, el que impide todo adelanto o perfeccionamiento, el que no consiente



estudio, meditación, ni calma a los escritores. El periodismo es también el que infunde y sostiene el mal gusto general."<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, William Henderson conceived a much more equitable evaluation of journalistic prose.<sup>34</sup> In his opinion, there were correlations between the two modes, since, at their best, both displayed a purity of diction and evoked readers' reactions. He also recognized that journalism, if not exactly anti-literary in essence, was to be distinguished from the novel, for, whereas newspaper reports offered a simple, exact account of events, literature was basically "a grand display of fancy", portraying reality through "a glittering web of language". Newspaper reports had to be written with a sense of objectivity and keen observation, elements which essentially stifled sentiments and hampered accepted literary purposes such as the abstract portrayal of ideals and emotions. Additionally, journalistic reports excluded reflection, evaluation and extrapolation of ideas, while literature deliberately fostered them. In conclusion, Henderson advised "boys who wish to make their marks as literary workers to let daily journalism alone. It is the poorest training in the world for literary life" ("Journalism versus Literature", p. 715). To emphasize his assessment further, he demonstrated that professional advancement in journalism was derived, not through literary ability, but through dedication to politics. Hence, journalism, while not necessarily anti-literary, was not to be taken as a substitute for the pursuit of literature.





Although we have attempted to point out some of the fundamental differences between journalism and the novel, it is nonetheless difficult to propose specific definitions covering all aspects and varieties of both genres. Hence, the most suitable approach in this study, as we evaluate the relationship between the two forms in Mexico, will be to consider specific cases and circumstances. Nevertheless, our initial discussion does provide a basis upon which to undertake some assessment since the question of a possible influence will arise directly when it is possible to indicate that the characteristics of one genre appear in the other. The newspaper report approximates the novel when it reflects a subjective perspective or incorporates elements of literary artifice; likewise, when the novelist expresses himself impersonally and explicitly, recounts daily and historical events in a succinct, realistic manner, or narrates events in short sentences based on verbs and avoids superfluous description, it may be that the newspaper has influenced his style of writing. Circumstantial considerations may also imply a relationship between the novel and journalism. When a writer has been both a journalist and a novelist, it will be necessary to be aware of the greater possibility of reciprocal influences in his work. Common thematic preoccupations will also provide a further basis for possible interaction, particularly when writers of both genres narrate and interpret factual events derived from the social and historical context of the nation and write according to a particular, partisan point of view. In such cases, a





relationship is most likely to exist between the novel and the editorial section of the newspaper, since evaluative analysis and commentary is the reserve of the editorialist. But, such correlations may be quite superficial, and so it is not sufficient simply to indicate a few similarities or to confirm several points of contact between the two modes, and then to accept that they have effectively interacted. In order to reach a definitive, substantiated conclusion that one genre has indeed influenced the other, all characteristics of form and content must be seen in their relationship to the whole, and the final evaluation formulated accordingly.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>José Acosta Montoro, Periodismo y literatura (Madrid: Ed. Guadarrama, 1973), pp. 51-52. Only first references to sources will be documented in full by means of a note. For subsequent references we shall cite abbreviated titles in parentheses in our text.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas H. S. Escott, "Literature and Journalism", Fortnightly Review, Vol. 97 (New Series, Vol. 91), January 1912, pp. 116 and 117.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Williams and Frank L. Martin, The Practice of Journalism (Columbia, Missouri: E. W. Stephens Publishing Co., 1911), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>W. Williams, Lectures on Journalism (México: Talleres Gráficos, 1926), No 1, p. 4. This opinion repeated an earlier one made by Williams in collaboration with F. Martin: "Journalism is in essence different from printing and publishing. It is the gathering and presentation of news and comments upon the news, of discussion of all that interests, entertains, informs or instructs. It affords the pictured record and interpretation of human life in every aspect. The journalist is recorder, advocate, buyer and seller of news, judge, tribune, teacher, interpreter. When he only buys and sells news, he is in business. When he merely records, he is clerk and bookkeeper for the day's doings. When he interprets, whether as a contributor, writer, editor, journalism is near of kin to literature, if it is not literature" (The Practice of Journalism, pp. 9-10). Henry Boynton concurred with this concept: "Between literature and 'the higher journalism' the partition is extremely thin. If I understand the term, the higher journalism means the function of impersonal comment employed at its utmost of breadth and dignity" (Journalism and Literature, Boston/New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1904, p. 79).

<sup>5</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Archibald MacLeish, "Poetry and Journalism", A Continuing Journey (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1967), pp. 26-27.

<sup>7</sup>J. Acosta Montoro, although he placed greater emphasis on the informative nature of journalism, admitted that, in comparison with radio and television, it was the informative medium that most closely approximated literature: "...es preciso adelantar que, si bien por mucho tiempo se ha considerado el 'periodismo' como prototipo de toda información, de toda comunicación, el periódico no es sino una forma más, la que por sus características y vinculaciones especiales está más próxima a la literatura, de modo que bien puede intercambiar con ella no





sólo influencias, sino géneros" (Periodismo y literatura, p. 38).

<sup>8</sup> Enrico Falqui, Giornalismo e letteratura (Milano: U. Mursia, 1969), p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Edgardo Henry Ríos, "Literatura y periodismo", Atenea, Año XLIII, Tomo CLXIV, No 414 (Oct.-Dec., 1966), pp. 205-214.

<sup>10</sup>Francisco Zarco, "La reaparición del Siglo XIX", editorial in El Siglo XIX, January 15, 1861, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Alfonso Reyes, in part II of El deslinde, quoted by Salvador Calvillo Madrigal, La revolución que nos contaron (México: Metáfora, 1959), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Alí Chumacero has detailed the fundamental differences between the two methods of presentation: "...porque novela e historia si no se contradicen sí en cambio actúan por diversos caminos, pues una se apega al dato del tiempo y del espacio, la otra por el contrario resume en una actitud y a veces en una acción todas las complicaciones que los acontecimientos presentan. La historia en este sentido no puede hacer otra cosa que afirmar, en tanto la novela posee como calidad imprescindible para su existencia el derecho a negar y afirmar al mismo tiempo la verdad y la realidad de los hechos históricos" ("Revolución y novela", El Nacional, November 19, 1947, p. 5). Julieta Campos supports Chumacero in her discussion of the function of the novel: "...el historiador se atreve a narrar únicamente después de haber investigado y comprobado la veracidad de los hechos que efectivamente tuvieron lugar. El novelista realiza una investigación, acercándose al historiador, cuando pretende reconstruir una época..." (Función de la novela, México: J. Mortiz, 1973, p. 117).

<sup>13</sup>The English novelist E. M. Forster offered his own view of the inherent difficulties of setting generic limits to the novel: "...for the novel is a formidable mass, and it is so amorphous--no mountain in it to climb, no Parnassus or Helicon, not even a Pisgah. It is more definitely one of the moister areas of literature--irrigated by a hundred rills and occasionally degenerating into a swamp" (Aspects of the Novel, 1927; re-edited London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1958, p. 9). For our evaluation of the novel we have consulted, among others, the following texts: M. Baquero Goyanes, Estructura de la novela actual (Barcelona: Planeta, 1970); Marjorie Boulton, The Anatomy of Prose (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1954); Julieta Campos, Función de la novela (México: J. Mortiz, 1973); Pelham Edgar, The Art of the Novel (New York: MacMillan Co., 1933); Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Clayton Hamilton, Materials and Methods of Fiction (London: Grant Richards, 1909); Georges Lukacs, La théorie du roman (Geneva: Ed. Gonthier, 1963); Grant





Overton, The Philosophy of Fiction (New York/ London: Appleton and Co., 1928); Philip Stevick, The Theory of the Novel (New York: Free Press, 1967); René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962).

<sup>14</sup>Jean-Charles Falardeau, Notre société et son roman (Montreal: Ed. HMH, 1967), p. 75.

<sup>15</sup>John S. Brushwood, Mexico in Its Novel/ A Nation's Search for Identity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), p. ix. Jean-Charles Falardeau also understood the ambiguity in the presentation of reality. He stated that the world created by the novelist "tout à la fois n'est pas la société réelle et dérive de la société réelle. L'oeuvre littéraire est transcription d'un monde rêvé mais elle est aussi témoignage d'un sens profond qui justifie et sous-entend ce rêve" (Notre société et son roman, p. 76).

<sup>16</sup>Fernando Alegria, Literatura y revolución, Col. Popular 100 (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1971), p. 14.

<sup>17</sup>With literary magazines we enter a somewhat ambiguous area of journalism since these rarely meet the fundamental prerequisites of the genre, namely regular publication and informative reporting. It is true that literary magazines are usually published on a regular basis, but they rarely seek to inform the public on daily events, unless it deals in some tangential manner with their literary content. Consequently, our discussion of the relationship between the novel and journalism in Mexico will not relate directly to literary magazines.

<sup>18</sup>Regino Hernández Llergo, "También las revistas son parte del periodismo nacional", Impacto, No 411, December 18, 1957.

<sup>19</sup>We are thinking in particular of the better newspapers and their style, as outlined in the following pages. We are, therefore, less concerned with the sensationalist press, which fails to meet the duty of concise reporting and truthful narration. Such newspapers have purely financial gain and a wide circulation as their objectives, and are written to appeal to the less discriminating reader.

<sup>20</sup>Salvador Borrego, Periodismo trascendente, 4th ed. (México: Ed. Jus, 1961), p. 17.

<sup>21</sup>Fortino Ibarra de Anda made the following distinction between 'noticias' and 'crónicas', that is between news reports and editorials: "Toda crónica es noticia; pero no toda noticia puede hacerse en forma de crónica ni tener las prerrogativas de la crónica. El cronista puede aventurar comentarios sobre lo que ve, mientras que el reportero no debe hacerlo. Cuando se escriben noticias, deben relatarse los hechos, las entrevistas o





lo que sea, como si se tratara de hacer de la nota escrita un espejo que reprodujese el hecho relatado.... El cronista debe poner algo de su personalidad, so pena de que el trabajo salga árido y descolorido, pero sin olvidar que las apreciaciones deben ser discretas, originales e inteligentes" (El periodismo en México, México: Imprenta Mundial, 1934, pp. 160-161).

<sup>22</sup>Newspapers offer other informative elements as well, such as announcements, social news, cultural and artistic criticism, and summaries of sports events. However, because these items are frequently presented as a social service, have little importance as recorded news, and are directed towards specific interests they do not merit attention here.

<sup>23</sup>A. Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro, Periodismo y periodistas en Hispano América (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1947), pp. 141-142.

<sup>24</sup>Salvador Borrego stated, "El periodismo debe trascender el abismo que lo separa de la casi inaprehensible conciencia colectiva, que es el objeto de su acción. Y logrando esto, inducirle energías y luces que la conduzcan hacia su meta perenne de desenvolvimiento y progreso" (Periodismo trascendente, p. 129).

<sup>25</sup>"It is only when the scattered and illegible fragments in which we pick up our experience of the world are recompensed in such a way that they make sense as human experience that great journalism can result" ("Poetry and Journalism", p. 36).

<sup>26</sup>Frank Fraser Bond, Introducción al periodismo (México: Ed. Limusa Wiley, 1965), pp. 19-21. Bond elaborated each of his points in an explanatory paragraph following each requirement.

<sup>27</sup>It is necessary to point out that, aside from creditable, well written journalism, there are newspapers whose main interest is not to offer an objective, informative record of daily events, but rather to attract the largest possible reading public for financial profit. This objective is usually obtained by adopting an emphatically partisan stance or by focusing the informative content on the most sensationalist and salacious news items. Such newspapers, while perhaps enjoying great popularity, are of dubious informative worth and jeopardize their own integrity and reliability. As a result, we do not give them much attention in our study.

<sup>28</sup>Mario Castro Arenas, El periodismo y la novela contemporánea, Caracas: Monte Avila, 1969, p. 124. He further elaborated this last point: "... es innegable que en el siglo XIX el periodismo influye sobre la novela en su sistema de investigación en la vida social, en el adiestramiento en la observación de la realidad y como difusor de ideas motrices en la transformación social, política, religiosa y cultural" (p. 124).





This relationship continues in later years, although with some changes: "En el siglo XX, la huella del periodismo continúa en estos aspectos, que atienden primordialmente a lo que podríamos denominar la 'materia' de la novela, pero al mismo tiempo avanza en el aspecto formal, en la estructura artística del relato novelístico" (p. 124).

<sup>29</sup> We are not referring so much to the present era. Since the 1960's, there has been an increasing tendency in newspapers to credit individual journalists, who now sign their own news articles, and to encourage investigative journalism. This has had tangential repercussions in a number of novelized accounts, written by newspapermen, on some of the most sensationalist news stories, as was the case with the Watergate scandal, the Jonestown suicides, the Death of a President (1967; by William Raymond Manchester) and the Raid on Entebbe (1977; by Ira Peck).

<sup>30</sup> In spite of this comment, Ibarra de Anda showed a much severer attitude towards journalists: "Desde el punto de vista de la literatura, periodista es aquel que, queriendo cultivar sus dotes literarias, degeneró en literatoide" (El periodismo en México, p. 17).

<sup>31</sup> Acosta Montoro, although exaggerating the situation, acknowledged this role of journalism: "Inventada o no, la prensa era campo fundamental para los escritores. Desde su origen los periódicos abrían sus páginas a novelistas y ensayistas, a todas las gentes de letras que podían escribir un artículo, un comentario, una crítica con toda rapidez y cobrarlo con la misma celeridad. El artículo no es como el libro que requiere ser elaborado pausadamente. Pero hay algo más: el escritor, que conoce la vida por vocación y oficio, no puede quedarse al margen de un fenómeno comunicativo cuyo medio proporciona la posibilidad de influir en lo cotidiano, bien con la transición de noticias, bien con la transmisión de opiniones que pueden formar la actitud de sus lectores, de su comunidad y aun de su gobierno" (Periodismo y literatura, p. 51).

<sup>32</sup> Francisco J. Avila, El periodismo y su filosofía (Valencia, Venezuela: Ed. Tacarigua, 1963), p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Victoriano Agüeros, Escritores mexicanos contemporáneos (México: Imprenta Escalante, 1880), p. xxvii; quoted by G. Sánchez Azcona, "El contenido literario de la obra periodística de Juan Sánchez Azcona", Tesis en Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963, p. 97.

<sup>34</sup> William J. Henderson, "Journalism versus Literature", Lippincott's monthly magazine, Vol. 46 (Nov., 1890), pp. 712-715.



## II

### Journalism and its Relationship with Literature in Mexico

Although the development of Mexican journalism did not really begin until the first part of the XIXth century,<sup>1</sup> stimulated by the movement for Independence, its earliest forms had appeared during the Colonial era. In 1539, a printing press was established in the capital, and by 1541 the first 'hojas volantes' began to circulate. These handbills or flyers were not regular publications, but appeared only whenever events of sufficient importance in Mexico or the Spanish Empire made it necessary to inform the general public or provide suitable commentary. The 'hojas volantes' were extremely popular and continued to represent an important aspect of news dissemination until the XIXth century. In time, and under the influence of European models, Mexico also expanded its early 'journalism' to include "mercurios" and "gacetas". The gazettes were principally vehicles of political news and opinions, published irregularly in response to political contingencies and specific needs; the first in Mexico was published in 1722 by Bishop Juan J. Castorena Ursúa Govenche. By contrast, the 'mercurios' contained





information of greater general interest, and focused, in particular, on literary and scientific topics and subjects of immediate interest, a focus which served to deflect much of the pressure and censorship that the authorities exercised against the political content of the gazettes. These three forms were embryonic stages in the development of Mexican journalism, not fully fledged examples of the genre; the flyers and gazettes failed to meet the requirement of publication on a regular basis, and the 'mercurios' generally avoided any commitment to act as a medium of information on current events.

The first, true attempt to create a newspaper conforming to the modern acceptance of the term took place in 1768 with the founding of José Antonio Alzate's Diario Literario, published from March until May of that year. Its articles were written, for the most part, in a cultivated style, reflecting the education of its contributors and the prevalent influence of French Encyclopaedism. The Diario's content consisted of a variety of notes and comments on all aspects of Mexican life, ranging from theological dissertations and theatrical reviews to news articles on scientific, literary and social events. Besides publishing reports of his own scientific research into such diverse fields as physics, astronomy and medicine, Alzate also accepted articles covering a wide range of interests, for example, on Mexican agriculture, discussing the growing of cereals and the cultivation and benefits of cocoa. The Diario also reserved several pages for literary contributions, providing the writers of the day with a readily available means



of publication.

In 1805, a new daily appeared under the direction of Jacobo de Villaurrutia and Carlos María de Bustamente. This was the Diario de México (1805-1817), considered by most critics as the first true Mexican newspaper. The Diario's content included news reports on political developments as well as articles of general interest on social happenings and scientific discoveries, but was especially noted for its dedication to literature: "Una gran ayuda, y gran estímulo fué para la literatura el Diario de México.... El Diario dió a conocer, acogió, prohió, empolló a los escritores que iban a llenar el primer tercio del siglo XIX."<sup>2</sup> Thus, by the beginning of the XIXth century it was an accepted practice that literature should figure prominently in the regular content of Mexican journalism, providing a counterbalance to the perpetual, political concerns that figured so heavily following the onset of the Independence movement in 1810.<sup>3</sup>

The three centuries of development of the Mexican newspaper have been concisely summarized by Stanley Ross: "Si los siglos XVI y XVII marcan la gestación del periodismo mexicano y el XVIII el principio de su madurez, la primera parte del siglo XIX atestigua el desarrollo del periódico diario y del periodismo polémico político."<sup>4</sup> The growing, political ferment occasioned an upsurge in Revolutionary rhetoric in the newspapers, presented in a zealous, declamatory style intended to arouse the readers and convert them to the point of view held by the editorialist or contributor. At times, it was virtually





impossible to distinguish between literary contributions and political essays: "Desde los primeros días de la cruzada nacional, hubo escritores y publicaciones que acudieron a todos los géneros de la literatura periodística para alimentar la antorcha, ya encendida en el corazón de los mexicanos, de la Independencia y de la libertad."<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon was due to a number of circumstances. The educated elite, who might compose both literature and journalism, also belonged to the informed minority that ruled the country. As such, their influence was felt not only in the social and cultural domains of the nation, but in its political administration as well. It is not surprising, therefore, that their literary production should complement their political aspirations, as was frequently the case when they wrote politically compromised articles for newspaper publication.

It is a fact that almost all Mexican writers of the XIXth century, from the most important such as José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi and Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, to those of less renown such as Manuel Paynó, Guillermo Prieto and Vicente Riva Palacios, were affiliated with journalism in one form or another throughout their literary careers.<sup>6</sup> For some, their association was that of collaborators who regularly submitted extracts, short literary works and critiques for publication in the daily newspaper; others were more directly connected with the routine of publication, and acted as directors and editors of periodicals. As a consequence, literary production and newspaper articles often displayed a similarity of style and content,





particularly in periods of political upheaval when pressing national concerns predominated in all writing. Such was the case with Lizardi: "Folletos, periódicos personales y calendarios, todo era en la pluma de Lizardi un mismo instrumento para dar salida al caudaloso curso de sus doctrinas y prédicas sociales. Sus periódicos y calendarios estaban redactados en su totalidad por 'El Pensador', y no se diferenciaban de los folletos más que por su nombre y su aparición periódica" (J. L. Martínez, La expresión nacional ... siglo XIX, p. 22). The same evaluation can be applied to his novels, in which he dealt with the same themes of society, politics and patriotism and used the same narrative style as in his other prose compositions.<sup>7</sup>

Altamirano followed similar tendencies. He was intimately associated with journalism, collaborating extensively in the newspapers of his day while founding and directing others of his own. José Luis Martínez has clearly detected the effects of his occupation as a journalist in his literary works: "Debía redactarlas [sus obras literarias] en casi todos los casos, como artículos que integraban una serie y, según la tradición periodística, con una prisa que excluía necesariamente el reposo de la meditación, la confrontación de los datos o el pulimiento del estilo" (La expresión nacional ... siglo XIX, pp. 79-80). Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to assume that Altamirano's strong affiliation with journalism outweighed the importance of his role in Mexican letters. His prime interest was always directed towards the creation of a worthwhile, national literature, an objective that, in the final analysis, raised his



literary endeavours above the limitations of informative and polemical journalism.

The integration of journalism and literature in the XIXth century was so widely prevalent that in his study of El arte literario en México (1878), the critic Enrique de Olavarría y Ferrari declared, "...he hablado con especialidad de los escritores marcadamente periodistas. Pero en México ya he dicho que por lo regular lo son cuantos toman la pluma."<sup>8</sup> Although his observation was doubtless an exaggeration, it indicates the extent of the liaison between the two genres. Even to-day, a considerable part of the literature produced in the XIXth century and published in newspapers remains buried in libraries, forgotten, to a large degree, by modern scholars.<sup>9</sup>

The extent of the relationship between journalism and literature was no mere coincidence, but rather the natural consequence of specific circumstances. This was not unique to Mexico, of course, but given the state of Mexican society and its slowness in developing, one can easily understand how the situation endured until the beginning of the XXth century. In the first place, journalism provided many writers with the most natural and opportune means of earning a living. In addition, the high cost of paper in Mexico made the publication of nominally priced books unfeasible, and authors rarely had the economic resources to arrange independent publication. By the same token, the high cost of books effectively prohibited any large public sale of a work, a predicament exacerbated by the high percentage of illiteracy (about 85 per cent during the





'Porfirista' years and still as high as 60 per cent in 1928), and further limited public acceptance of literature. There were other difficulties as well, including the lack of adequate printing presses, the problem of finding a suitable publishing firm and their general lack of organization. Consequently, journalism seemed ideally designed to provide writers with an immediate and accessible means of overcoming their predicament.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, newspapers themselves were generally directed towards an intellectual elite and therefore towards the sectors of society most apt to appreciate the writers' literary endeavours.

Evidently, literature did not associate itself with every form of XIXth century journalism, certainly not with the 'volantes', even though these enjoyed great popularity among the uneducated masses: "El periodismo antiguo nunca fué popular entre nosotros, ni pudo serlo en un país donde el ochenta por ciento era analfabetos; el periodismo popular de entonces eran los volantes...".<sup>11</sup> In response to the preferences of a readership that was more interested in the latest news from Europe and in details of the most remarkable and sensationalist events on the national scene, the flyers concentrated specifically on news information and shunned literary content. Still, the flyers were of relatively minor importance in the XIXth century; the dailies and the magazines not only provided the main support to literature during that period, but also served as the principal vehicles of expression for the ruling classes in Mexico. As would be expected, literary figures



preferred to ally themselves with the most influential forms of journalism in order to ensure themselves a suitably cultivated and appreciative public.

The literary periodicals and magazines were at the forefront in fostering literary collaborations. Such publications contained literary criticism as well as some works by Mexican writers, but generally concentrated on presenting Spanish translations of European and North American authors, in particular those who were most popular or who represented the latest trends. The literary periodicals, in accordance with the simple expectations of their subscribers and the standards of the time, were not so specialized as those of today: "No se escribían estas revistas como las actuales, exclusivamente para lectores especializados; antes bien,...los escritores del siglo XIX entendían la literatura como un medio de comunicar emociones placenteras a los lectores medios, procurando al mismo tiempo fortalecer sus creencias religiosas y ampliar 'sin lágrimas' sus conocimientos culturales" (J. L. Martínez, La expresión nacional ... siglo XIX, p. 218). As a consequence, the literary content of the magazines reflected three fundamental objectives: to publish all forms of literature (poetry, short stories, chronicles) as a means of entertaining and instructing the public; to introduce representative works of the latest literary trends, thereby keeping readers abreast of new developments; and, thirdly, to provide writers with an appropriate means of bringing their works to the attention of the public. In the second half of the XIXth century, especially under the auspices





of Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, directors of literary periodicals sought to promote a reputable, national literature, and adopted these aims as essential to the achievement of their goal. Altamirano's own response was to found El Renacimiento (1869), one of the most important literary magazines of its time. Its purpose was to promote a genuine renaissance in Mexican writing, based on the development of an autochthonous and truly national literature which would synthesize the essence of the Mexican character. Altamirano's desires extended beyond mere patriotic sentimentality; he also wished to end the partisan divisions which had plagued the nation as a consequence of the 'Guerra de la Reforma' and the French Intervention. His success was such that El Renacimiento included literary collaborations from every political, religious and social faction in the country:

[The fact that both liberals and conservatives collaborated in the magazine] is descriptive of the nature of the literary effort behind El Renacimiento. Literary activity was understood to be an important aspect of the nation's effort, but it was not related to political ideology. And Altamirano's specific plea for a national literature meant 'national', not 'nationalistic'. Although he stated some social opinions in his own works, his emphasis was on more basic considerations. He thought that Mexican literature would take its surroundings into account, and at the same time teach a moral lesson; but the fundamental purpose of literature was artistic, not propagandistic.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of its brief duration, the influence of his magazine was without precedent, initiating a literary revival, the effects of which were still evident at the beginning of the XXth century.

In contrast to the literary magazines, the Mexican





newspaper, in theory, provided a concise summary of the most newsworthy events of the national and international scene, retaining only a marginal interest in literature. However, news accounts, in reality, were written as subjective and evaluative commentaries of daily developments, presented in a more or less literary fashion and often influenced by the most prevalent literary styles of the day. Moreover, newspapers focused only on the events of greatest importance and reported only the actions of persons of note; there was little attempt to provide succinct, informative reports to enlighten the uneducated majority, or to provide accounts of human interest stories and the achievements of the common individual. "El hombre masa", as Mario Castro Arenas referred to him, was ignored:

El hombre masa poco importaba a este periodismo de subido tono literario en el que más valía cómo se contaban los hechos, eso es, el aspecto estilístico, que los hechos en sí por su independiente valor periodístico. Esta circunstancia determinaba que los más brillantes escritores de la época utilizaron el periodismo como su constante tribuna de expresión, por lo que puede decirse que muchas veces se practicaba un periodismo de escritores para escritores.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the newspapers of that period were not developed as financial enterprises, concerned solely with the gathering and distribution of news. Most were mouthpieces of a specific political faction or vehicles of ideological propaganda,<sup>14</sup> a political option often limited to the expression of a bias for or against the government:

...el periodismo del pasado fué casi completamente burocrático, en el sentido de que,



quienes lo hacían, eran empleados públicos; el director del periódico era un político, burocrático de hecho o en aspiraciones; los editorialistas y articulistas, partidarios del político que sostenía moralmente la publicación y los reporteros, infelices bohemios que, por la satisfacción de elogiar o denigrar al sol que nacía rendían jornadas de dos columnas a peso columna publicada.... (F. Ibarra de Anda, El periodismo en México, p. 40)

This motive accounted for the founding of El Siglo XIX (1841-1896) and El Monitor Republicano (1850-1896), the leading liberal standard-bearers of the age and the most outstanding newspapers in the second half of the XIXth century. However, the adoption of any specific, political stance eventually produced the same results: the subjective and partisan criteria effectively usurped the role of objective, factual reporting, jeopardizing the essential reliability of the newspaper. Enrique de Olavarría y Ferrari, a contemporary of the period, attested to such tendencies in Mexico's opposition newspapers:

"...algunos han tomado por regla de conducta la oposición sistemática á todos y á todo, y no pocas veces han incurrido en las miserias consiguientes a tamaño despropósito, que acabará por hacerles inútiles por descrédito" (El arte literario de México, p. 56). This does not mean that every 'informative' newspaper of the day became politically committed to one or another faction. A few editors attempted to preserve a balanced, uncompromised neutrality, but they were an exception, constantly beset by political pressures and hard pressed to maintain financial independence if they remained non-aligned or did not cater to some specific interest group, whether literary,





religious, or political, that would endorse the publication.

The function of news reporting was, in reality, only one aspect of the makeup of newspapers during the XIXth century. In an effort to reach the largest possible public, the editors offered everything they thought likely to appeal to the greatest variety of interests. In the opinion of A. Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro, "el periodismo en América se vió, casi desde su aparición, obligado a recoger en sus columnas ecos de todas las esferas de la vida nacional, tanto económicas como literarias, tanto políticas como informativas" (Periodismo y periodistas en Hispano América, p. 9). Accordingly, the importance, even the need, of news reports in literary journals and in many weeklies was naturally of little consequence; at the same time, news items in specialized newspapers were focused specifically to provide information relevant to the particular interests of the subscribers. In fact, a survey of journalistic content reveals that it was not the news section but the literary pages which were the most common element in Mexican journalism. The literary offerings varied in extent according to the basic needs and objectives of each newspaper, but typically all were intended in some way as entertainment for the reader. Hence newspaper directors ensured that there was an appropriate mixture of light reading and of excerpts from the works of more fashionable and respected authors. In this sense, 'literature' comprised a great variety of forms:

En los periódicos de información general solían publicarse folletines en su mayoría de novelas traducidas del francés, de reproducciones de



obras compuestas originalmente en español, y de artículos, poesías, ficciones escritas exclusivamente para un específico órgano periodístico. Además de los folletines había secciones con encabezamientos tales como 'Sección Literaria', 'Literatura', 'Variedades', 'Crónicas', 'Revistas', 'Bibliografía', etcétera, en que el lector podía entretenerse provechosamente leyendo artículos críticos y biográficos, reseñas de libros, notas y apuntes de actualidad, anécdotas, poesías, cuadros de costumbre, leyendas, revistas de teatro, de la ópera, de las modas.<sup>15</sup>

To appreciate fully the pre-eminence of literature in the newspapers of the XIXth century, one has only to note their descriptive titles; El Siglo XIX (1841-1896), for example, declared itself a "Diario político, literario, informativo y de avisos" under the caption "Bellas artes / Progreso / Unión / Comercio / Industria", while La Patria (1877-1914) was designated a "Diario político, científico, literario, comercial y de anuncios". Such wide perspectives persisted until the first decade of the XXth century, particularly in newspapers less inclined to adapt themselves to the new standards recently introduced. Thus, El Mundo (1895-1914; after 1900 called El Mundo Ilustrado) was labelled "Publicación científica y literaria de bellas artes, informativa y de avisos"; El Diario (1906-1914) was a "Periódico político, literario y de información"; and El Debate (1909-1910) declared itself a "Publicación ilustrada política, literaria y de información" with the political motto "Ojo por ojo y diente por diente".

Although newspapers included daily literary contributions, usually in the form of poems, short stories or serialized





novels, this was not the limit of their dedication to literature. Customarily, they also published a special weekly edition or supplement in the form of a literary magazine. Accordingly, El Diario del Hogar designated its Monday edition the "Lunes literario", a practice which El Imparcial copied when, after 1898, it presented its own "Lunes literario"; several years later El Imparcial modified its supplement to make it an independent Sunday literary magazine. El Mundo edited a separate, weekly magazine of literary and general interest material under the title El Semanario Ilustrado, while, similarly, La Patria published a special Monday edition called La Patria Ilustrada. In addition to these supplements, most newspapers also dedicated several extra pages of the Sunday edition exclusively to literary collaborations.

The close relationship between informative journalism and literary material remained unaltered in Mexico until the final years of the XIXth century. At that time, however, certain innovations produced significant changes in the style, tone and format of the newspaper, initiating the process that would transform Mexican journalism from an elitist, subjective presentation of personal commentaries to the direct, informative manner of reportage demanded by modern standards. The first modifications were instituted in 1888 with the founding of El Universal (1888-1901) by Rafael and Oscar Reyes Spíndola. Following North American and European models, these journalists emphasized the informative aspect of news information (El Universal was called simply a "Diario político") and made





radical changes to the accepted format and content of the newspaper. The number of pages in El Universal was doubled to eight, and the character of news reporting was significantly altered by stressing the anonymous presentation of succinct and impersonal information. Naturally, one newspaper could not immediately transform Mexican journalism, but the experience acquired in this first attempt provided the basis for more definitive forms established in El Imparcial (1896-1914) and El Mundo (1896-1906), two "diarios de información" directed by Rafael Reyes Spíndola. In both of these, the news reports, consisting of direct, objective information, were given a position of prime importance; editorials, although still of consequence, were relegated to a position of secondary consideration, and were given the function of commenting on current events and concerns. The internal structure of the newspaper also evolved toward an established format, which required that news reports should appear on the first pages, followed by a page of editorial comment, several pages containing notes and commentaries on social events, judicial proceedings, sports information, and family life, and finally several pages of advertisements and classified notices. With El Imparcial, Reyes Spíndola introduced the latest technological advances in newspaper printing, particularly the use of rotating presses, a move which permitted him to reduce the copy price of his newspapers drastically and to make subscriptions available to a much larger, although less affluent and less educated public. Such innovations were not long in making a significant



impact on Mexican Journalism as a whole, as noted in contemporary observations made by Eulalio I. Aguilar, editor of the weekly El Mundo (1895-1914): "En los últimos días se ha observado un nuevo impulso en la prensa, encaminado á dotar á las publicaciones periodísticas de visibles mejoras en su servicio general. Este movimiento responde á la acentuada demanda que los grupos lectores hacen del producto. ...ofreceré nuevos alicientes á la intelectualidad nacional, que comienza á salir de las obscuras nieblas en que se ha debatido" (El Mundo, July 26, 1896, p. 50).

Most historians of Mexican Journalism have praised Reyes Spíndola and his innovations for their positive results:

...funda [El Imparcial] Reyes Spíndola en la ciudad capital dotándolo de maquinaria moderna; pero principalmente haciendo evolucionar su técnica periodística, pues relega a segundo término los editoriales y artículos polémicos, que eran el mayor lucimiento de la prensa de entonces, y da preferencia absoluta a las noticias. Hace algo más: vende a un centavo el ejemplar... Con él, triunfan los redactores informativos sobre los escritores y se cotiza mejor un buen reportaje que un sesudo artículo. (Mario Rojas Avendaño, "El periodismo", México: 50 años de Revolución, IV, p. 566)<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, any equitable assessment of Reyes Spíndola's endeavours must, in fairness, make note of other characteristics which, although of equal importance, were much less commendable. The new direction initiated by Reyes Spíndola was an evolutionary process, so that even in El Imparcial it was common to encounter a continued, evaluative stance in news reporting, and to observe a subjective approach in addressing 'nuestros lectores' and in commenting upon 'nuestros reportazgos'.





Moreover, although by 1905 most progressive newspapers had adopted the new standards of style and informative reporting, firmly establishing them as appropriate criteria for journalism, Spíndola's newspapers showed a marked propensity for sensationalism, a bias which appealed to the mentality of the less discriminating majority, but which ultimately diminished the integrity of his publications. El Imparcial's political partisanship similarly failed to coincide with Reyes Spíndola's views on impartiality. As the official organ of the 'Porfirista' regime, his newspaper adopted a staunchly pro-government stance which it maintained against all opposition and under all circumstances, a fact which is hardly surprising since the enterprise received a yearly subsidy from the government, amounting in 1910 to the then considerable sum of 50,000 pesos. Yet, despite these faults, one cannot deny the importance of El Imparcial as the leader of the new order in Mexican journalism and the model which all other newspapers had to follow if they wished to survive and compete effectively for public attention.<sup>17</sup> Although the transition was, to a large degree, based on trends already well established in Europe and North America, Reyes Spíndola deserves praise for his role in the modernization of Mexican journalism to the point where it could compare favourably with that of other, more developed countries. This in itself produced further, important repercussions. The industrialization of the newspaper trade produced significant economic developments, resulting in a reduction in subscription rates, and, at the same time, producing an increase in financial



remuneration to journalists. As a direct consequence of the increase in circulation, the masses began to command greater consideration, which, in turn, stimulated interest in fundamental social concerns. This contributed to a greater awareness of the individual and his rights, and led to a resurgence of interest in the past, in an endeavour to discuss and describe Mexico.

These new trends also began to modify the formerly close relationship between journalism and literature. As the regular dailies increasingly restricted their material to informative reporting, writers of literature transferred their affiliation to literary magazines, or sought to have their works printed in books independently of newspapers.<sup>18</sup> Conditions within the publishing industry had also improved, further contributing to this incipient dissociation. As books became cheaper, and the initial effects of social progress began to reduce the level of illiteracy, writers began to recognize the benefits in having a wider public. Nonetheless, these conditions did not result in a sudden and definitive break with the past. Journalism persisted undeniably as the most direct and immediate form of contact with a large reading public, a fact well appreciated by politicians, historians and other writers of prose. Yet, although literature was increasingly limited in the newspaper, and generally included only as light entertainment for the reader, important literary contributions continued to appear regularly in the informative press. By the same token, literature still remained as only one facet of the activities of many writers, who





maintained their professional relationship with journalism, a circumstance well demonstrated in the case of novelists such as Federico Gamboa, Angel de Campo, Amado Nervo, Luis Urbina and Heriberto Frías.

As Revolutionary fervour grew and Mexico approached the decisive year of 1910, newspapers tended to become more intensely compromised in the factional debates of the day. The partisan stance taken by journalists usually accorded with one of the two constant and antagonistic views typical of Mexican politics: the liberals decried the problems and injustices besetting the nation, while the conservative factions stressed that everything in Mexico exemplified peace, stability and progress. John S. Brushwood remarked on the evidently contradictory points of view: "These few years, when the planned reality of the científicos disappeared and Mexico moved into the Revolution, were agonizing times of searching for solutions that were hidden behind the wall built by the establishment. In the world of ordinary knowing--that is to say, the information that we would get from the newspaper--there was a curious mixture of stability and discontent" (*Mexico in Its Novel*, p. 159). The difference of opinion was closely linked to the nature of the newspapers: the liberal journalists, who often led the opposition movement, made a point of expressing discontent with the social and political circumstances characteristic of the Díaz regime and of opposing staunchly the re-election of



Porfirio Díaz as President. On the other hand, the conservative, pro-government newspapers praised the stability and progress achieved in Mexico under thirty years of 'Porfirista' rule, and attributed its progress to the strength of the Díaz government and the social order it maintained. As might be expected, El Imparcial was at the forefront of the government's defenders. A typical article of the newspaper was that published on July 11, 1906, entitled "¿Tenemos revolucionarios?". The editorialist discussed Mexico's political stability, extolled the justice and benefits provided through strong government control and stressed the need for continued federal domination. He vilified those newspapers that did not agree with this view, criticizing them for their unwarranted, unpatriotic and unjustifiable opposition. In conclusion, he cited the popularity and justice of the Díaz administration as an explanation for the lack of revolutionaries and, therefore, dismissed the possibility of a revolution. The same newspaper also assured its readers of Mexico's strong economic position and financial prospects, declaring, "TODOS DISFRUTAN DEL MAYOR BIENESTAR y nadie carece de medios de vivir, como pueda y quiera trabajar" (January 21, 1908, p. 1). El Imparcial was not alone in its impassioned defence of the 'pax porfiriana'; El Debate, dismissing the recurrent spectre of a national Revolution in 1906, reasoned in accordance with the positivist philosophy of the 'Porfiristas':

PORQUE NO PUEDE HABER REVOLUCION EN MEXICO  
 SOLAMENTE SE LEVANTAN LOS PUEBLOS EN EPOCAS DE  
 VERDADERO MALESTAR, Y ENTONCES TIENEN DERECHO A





HACERLO  
 ENTRE NOSOTROS HABRA NECESIDADES PERO NO MISERIA  
 (OCTOBER 16, 1906)

The liberal newspapers took an opposing point of view to condemn the extent of poverty, foreign exploitation and debilitating social problems that afflicted the nation. The year 1906 marked the formal beginning of a true, opposition campaign on their part, fomented by three important events which occurred in that year. In June, there was a coordinated strike at the copper mines in Cananea, Chihuahua, and, although the altercation and its revolutionary overtones were brutally suppressed by federal forces backed by American interests, they provided a rallying point for Díaz's nationalist and liberal opponents. In Mexican politics, the year marked a movement of re-affirmation of Porfirio Díaz as president (despite the fact he had been re-elected for another six year term in 1904) and this gesture further aroused the muted opposition of liberals and 'antirreleccionistas'. On the international scene, the military uprising in Russia sparked significant interest among the Mexican population, and was the topic of extensive newspaper commentary. Even the pro-government dailies supported this great 'social' advance. Comments in *La Patria* effectively expressed the general consensus of reaction in Mexico: "A LA REVOLUCION.... Estamos en plena revolución rusa, en la gran revolución, que, á semejanza de la francesa, reformará la sociedad actual" (July 27, 1906, p. 1).<sup>19</sup>

With their increased dedication to political compromise



and partisan loyalty, newspapers once again reinstated subjective commentary and evaluative articles as the basis of their content and abandoned many of the innovations instituted by Reyes Spíndola: "...hay una reanimación de la prensa política, que subordina a los comentarios, la información pura, hasta anularla en ocasiones por completo."<sup>20</sup> There was also a tendency to reduce or suppress literary contributions and general interest sections, including the daily, serialized novel, as a means of providing more space for political rhetoric and partisan reporting.<sup>21</sup> In response to the changing national concerns, the older, established newspapers tended to align themselves with one or another of the political factions, while, at the same time, interested groups founded new publications to meet changing political circumstances and the need to inform the public. The most outstanding of the pro-Revolutionary newspapers were R. Flores Magón's Regeneración, El Diario del Hogar, edited by Filomeno Mata, El Antirreeleccionista, under Félix F. Palavicini, and Juan Sánchez Azcona's México Nuevo. The principal vehicles for conservative sentiment, under the primacy of El Imparcial, were El Debate, La República, El Reeleccionista, and El Porfirista.

México Nuevo (1909-1910) was typical of the opposition newspapers founded at this time. Describing itself as a "Diario democrático", it was the official voice of the "Partido Democrático" and appeared under the caption "Patria, Verdad y Justicia". Its political posturing, explicitly indicated in its first editorial, "Nuestra política", exemplified the trends of





the time:

En cuanto á nuestro PROGRAMA MAXIMO sería extemporáneo y, por ende, ocioso, pretender bosquejarlo en estas breves líneas. Bástenos decir que él se ajustará estrictamente á los principios universales del sentimiento patriótico, del apego á la verdad y del culto á la justicia.... Tendremos siempre ante nuestros ojos las tres grandes etapas de la Democracia--la política, la económica y la social -- y por ellas marcharemos siempre, procurando alcanzar los mayores progresos, por medios eficaces, dentro de las posibilidades sucesivas de cada año, de cada día, de cada hora. (January 1, 1909, p. 1)<sup>22</sup>

On the opposite side, El Debate (1909-1910) was one of the most ardent and representative of the pro-'Porfirista' newspapers. It began its existence, like all similar publications, by outlining its principal, political objectives:

Nuestro programa es breve porque es claro...

El Debate no entonará deliciosas sinfonías á los viles errores de la plebe. --Se propone decir y sostener la verdad, porque ella, si á veces lastima el corazón, posee siempre la virtud del hierro de Aquiles....

El Debate tiene candidato y algo más: la entereza de osarlo.

SOMOS PARTIDARIOS DEL SENOR CORRAL....

Admiramos al Héroe que ha hecho la Patria [Porfirio Díaz].

Condenamos todo inicuo intento de hacer escombros el orden social, porque sobre los escombros del orden social, se enderezan las dictaduras.

Que se escuche en el país la voz solemne de la ley, no el bárbaro estridor de la demagogía....

(June 5, 1909, p. 1)

Throughout its short duration, El Debate sustained the same partisan vein, sacrificing all principles of objective and impartial news reporting and criticizing all who did not coincide with its point of view. A typical display of its irresponsible factionalism was evinced in its caustic evaluation



of the liberal opposition, dismissed as "ENEMIGOS DEL GENERAL DIAZ / Hipócritas por cobardía" (July 10, 1909).

During the period of great political and social upheaval in Mexico from 1910 to 1920, the newspaper industry was as vulnerable to the effects of the war as any other national institution, and it is not surprising that newspapers were drastically reduced in number, and their development as a whole seriously impeded. The military faction in power at any given moment moved to silence all opposition newspapers as a means of maintaining its own control, with the result that publications were either sporadic or short lived. Viewing the decade as a whole, however, newspaper publishing can be divided into two general periods. Until 1914, the majority of newspapers published were those that had existed prior to 1910. This conformed to historical developments since, after the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz, Francisco Madero instituted a unique period of democracy which insured the continuation of existing social customs and structures and permitted freedom for the press. During Huerta's subsequent dictatorship, reactionary trends re-established journalistic styles reminiscent of an earlier decade.<sup>23</sup> However, this all changed in 1914 as the consequence of two crucial events. In that year, a critical shortage of newsprint, brought about by the political instability in the country, resulted in numerous newspapers being forced to suspend publication; in many cases, they failed to reappear even with later improvements in the political climate. The year also marked a decisive stage in the Revolutionary movement, a





development which settled the ascendancy of the liberal, pro-Revolutionary newspapers and resulted in the curbing or closure of the more reactionary, conservative publications. Henceforth, and notably under the Constitutionalist government of Venustiano Carranza, leading journalists allied themselves with the Revolution, seeking to further its ideals and evaluate its achievements in light of their own partisan preferences and political precepts.

Not all critics viewed the role of journalism during the Revolution in a favourable light. According to Fortino Ibarra de Anda the initial fault of newspapermen in the Revolution had been a failure to fulfil their duties properly:

Los periódicos podían haber sido líderes de la Revolución, pero no lo fueron porque los encontró desprevenidos y corrompidos, es decir uncidos al yugo dictatorial que los conformaba con migajas de ilusorio bienestar. Por eso fué que, cuando la Revolución se impuso, se encontraban los revolucionarios con que no tenían periodistas técnicos. (El periodismo en México, p. 62)

This opinion is only partly justified, and is certainly not representative of the situation as a whole. During the pre-Revolutionary years excellent journalists, with distinguished credentials and valuable experience, had played a prominent part in guiding the opposition movement. Two such leaders were Heriberto Frías and Juan Sánchez Azcona, both of whom continued to promote a strong, equitable and informative style of journalism, even during the most crucial years of the conflict. Other noteworthy newspapermen distinguished themselves during the Revolution, among them Félix F. Palavicini, who founded El



Universal (1916), a newspaper destined to be one of the most important in modern Mexico. Palavicini believed that the newspaper had a definite role to play in the Revolution, particularly with the termination of the armed struggle for power. In his view, journalists should act as a guiding and restraining hand on politicians and should direct the nation toward the fulfillment of the promises and ideals which had been the ideological basis of the Revolution. It was with these ideas in mind that Palavicini conceived the political program of El Universal:

He visto de cerca como la montaña resiste impávida a todos los huracanes. He observado el sereno estoicismo, la voluntad firme, la energía tranquila de Carranza.

Intentaré traducir en el desaliñado estilo de la prensa diaria el deseo y el sentimiento de mis correligionarios, procuraré contribuir a la nueva organización política de mi patria, ahora que los poderes ungidos por el sufragio comienzan a establecerse; ...declaro que...vuelvo al periodismo para servir intereses comunes, ideales altos, sentimientos generosos y propósitos levantados....

El programa de El Universal, es el programa de la Revolución.

Mi pluma es amiga, pero no es esclava.

(October 1, 1916, p. 31)

In accordance with these objectives, El Universal and Excelsior, another of the major dailies, strove to perfect and maintain an impartial and informative style of reporting. Unfortunately, the majority of newspapers soon acquiesced to the pressures of contemporary reality, reverting once more to the old division between those that acted as defenders of the federal government (most notably, El Nacional Revolucionario, El Pueblo, El Universal) and those representing the view of the opposition





(Omega, México Nuevo, El Mañana). The only difference between pre- and post-Revolutionary divisions was that now the pro-government press embodied liberal, progressive views, while the conservative elements formed the opposition.

The prevalent, political concerns recorded in the newspapers from 1910 to 1920 were expressed not only in the news reports and special articles but in the editorials, and from time to time, in serialized contributions as well.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, the national situation did not exclude an awareness of the international scene, most notably of the First World War and its effects on Europe. Typically, Mexican journalism tended to favour sectarian analyses of the situation, supporting one or another of the opposing sides, or even creating totally new publications to serve as propaganda tools for specific powers.<sup>25</sup> With the high degree of partisan politics characteristic of newspaper reports in the decade, it is hardly surprising that news articles reflected a subjective tone of personal compromise in the events of the day. Nevertheless, the tenor of the report in El Pueblo commemorating the death of General Félix Gómez was somewhat excessive, even for the newspapers of that time:

Un estremecimiento de concordia tuvieron para él los verdes laureles, y las siemprevivas de los huertos salvajes, al saber la dolorosa nueva de la caída heroica, se irguieron noblemente sobre la tierra, húmida de sangre, en un anhelo de engalanar su tumba.

¡Noble muerte, noble laurel, noble siempreviva! (July 5, 1916, p. 1)

In fairness, it must be noted that even the most outstanding newspapers never completely eliminated the practice of making



direct appeal to their readers and of exploiting emotional details in writing facile, opinionated reports. In fact, after 1920, this propensity led directly to the predominance of sensationalist journalism in Mexico, especially in dealing with such matters as human interest tragedies and violent crimes.<sup>26</sup>

In spite of the attention paid to political and national concerns in the newspapers of the Revolutionary decade, editors never completely abandoned publication of literary collaborations. In fact, due to the scarcity of paper and the beleaguered condition of the publishing industry, the literary pages and supplements had regained a significant degree of importance. Serialized novels and treatises occupied a very central position, and reflected the two basic types of publications: works that analysed current political and social problems, and were consequently rather removed from literature as such (see note 24), and those that were essentially of an entertaining nature, usually novels and stories written by popular European and North American authors, chosen because they avoided political compromise. Even after 1915 when newspapers were most keenly involved in Revolutionary struggles and ideologies, editors continued to publish serialized novels that provided idle entertainment. Most notable among such selections were Edgar Allan Poe's Aventuras extraordinarias, H. Rider Haggard's Las minas del Rey Salomón, Mauricio Leblanc's La isla de los treinta ataúdes, Walter Scott's Ivanhoe, Manuel Payno's Los bandidos del Río Frío and Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis. There were other literary contributions





published in the newspapers, including poems, short stories and chronicles, but prior to 1914, this material regularly appeared in a special literary page in either the Sunday or Monday edition. After that date, the standard practice was to publish the entire Sunday edition as a sort of literary magazine. In later years this custom was again modified, and the regular Sunday newspapers once more became vehicles for informative news accounts, to which were appended a separate, literary supplement comprising poetry, short stories, anecdotes and other light reading.<sup>27</sup> It must be stressed that few newspapers actively sought to foment the publication of Revolutionary literature since the prime interest of newspaper editors was to entertain their subscribers. Hence, they published light, amusing compositions that would appeal to the vast majority of their public. Even the supplements and literary magazines followed this lead, replacing much of the purely literary content with articles and notes of general interest. W. Williams and F. L. Martin remarked on this development, "The spirit of the modern newspaper has affected the magazine and it has added timeliness to other excellencies and become journalistic rather than merely literary."<sup>28</sup>

Literary magazines continued to exist as separate entities, despite modifications in the other sectors of journalism. Such publications were dedicated almost exclusively to culture and literature, although they might include a few short news items relevant to the particular concerns of their readers. Surprisingly, however, they did not try to reflect the



contemporary cultural and historical milieu:

Close analysis of the content of these better [literary] periodicals brings to light the surprising fact that in them the traces of the Revolution are negligible. The literary periodical did not reflect the great social upheaval that was taking place. ...those of 1915-1920 give little hint of the national drama being enacted on Mexican soil; and even the shifting emphasis in the post-revolutionary periodical from literature as such to culture in general scarcely suggests the social revolution taking place. Education and art were then both emphasized; and in both fields the trend toward nationalism is marked. This was not true of the literature presented; instead a growing interest in the production of the United States was manifest, and the close bonds between Mexico, France and Hispanic America were very evident.<sup>29</sup>

The most representative of the Mexican literary periodicals were El Universal Ilustrado (1917-1941) and El Mundo de las Aventuras (1918-1922). The latter, styling itself "una publicación literaria", offered an extensive variety of material: "novelas de aventuras, policíacas, de costumbres, de capa y espada. Es un magazine que tiene de todo y para todos". For the most part, its novels were translations of North American, English and French authors. El Mundo de las Aventuras provided one or two pages of short news items also, but these were carefully manipulated so as to accord with its basic intent to entertain and delight the reader. El Universal Ilustrado contained a larger informative section dealing with important events as well as social, cultural and film news, in keeping with its stated objectives: "El Universal Ilustrado no es un periódico de 'sensacionalismo' brutal ni de desenfrenado noticierismo. Ha procurado colocarse en el justo medio: informa, pero también cultiva y también





enseña" (May 11, 1917, p. 5). Accordingly, the focus of the weekly was to entertain and instruct, without ever committing itself to reflect the harsh reality of current social problems. The literary content was comprised of poetry, anecdotes, narratives and short stories, the latter chosen from the sphere of detective, cowboy and adventure stories. From time to time, the editors also included short compositions about the Revolution, but only if these narratives had entertainment value and were ideologically uncommitted.

Fortino Ibarra de Anda's summation of Mexican journalism during the decade of the Revolution, although somewhat negative, is well made:

...ninguno de los que tuvieron a su cargo el periódico en aquellos días conocía el manejo interior de un diario de importancia, menos la psicología muy especial del público en aquellos momentos; las páginas de los periódicos salían llenas de literatura retrasada, de notas policíacas y de ditirámicos elogios aun a jefecillos inferiores; nada de doctrina social; la política de facción era lo más serio de que se escribía en aquellos periódicos, y la única norma que el público sensato tenía para orientarse, eran los partes oficiales sobre los combates entre los diversos grupos. Todos los periódicos revolucionarios de este período...se caracterizan por la inconsistencia y exaltación de las ideas que exponían. (El periodismo en México, p. 64)

Although the newspapers of the time generally failed to provide the impartial perspective and informative style required of good journalism, one must remember that they were trying to respond to prevailing conditions. Hence, the mixture of apparently contradictory elements. The partisan, committed news reporting on the one hand, with light, escapist literature on the other, was



the result of trying to include something to satisfy the tastes and expectations of all readers. Notwithstanding this situation, there remained newspaper directors dedicated to upholding the standards of objective reporting in a creditable style. This is evidenced by the appearance of the two dailies El Universal (1916) and Excélsior (1917), founded towards the end of the Revolutionary decade and destined to become two of the most important newspapers in modern Mexico:

Excélsior siguió la presentación del Times neoyorquino y compitió con El Universal de Palavicini durante muchos años. Ambos periódicos nacieron y crecieron como modelos del periodismo moderno con información y artículos excelentemente escritos y con ilustrativos y abundantes gráficos lo que revela la fuerte influencia americana en ellos.<sup>30</sup>

By 1920, these two dailies had become the accepted models of reputable Mexican journalism. That is not to say that they dominated all fields of newspaper production, since the era was remarkable for the proliferation of new forms and publications, especially those dedicated to specialized topics such as sensationalist events, sports reporting, economics or religious news.<sup>31</sup> However, they did provide the necessary leadership for promoting the standards of informative and impartial news coverage in journalism, especially after the turbulent events of the preceding decade. In this, they were abetted by several other factors. By then, journalism was increasingly viewed as a professional vocation, bound to the reading public, with the duty to inform objectively and precisely on the important political, social and human events. At the same time, the





reading public, by now much larger and more demanding, expected to be informed without the encumbrance of personal evaluations and subjective commentaries.

Despite the stylistic and informative preeminence of Excélsior and El Universal, newspaper style in general, by the mid-1920's, demonstrated an increasing tendency toward 'yellow' journalism. This trend developed to meet the preferences of the majority of newspaper subscribers who, although able to influence the editor in his choice of content, showed a lack of discrimination in their preference of material. They especially favoured publications which presented all manner of lurid reports on crimes, violence and similar happenings, substantiated with a great many appropriate photographs. These illustrations, included to reproduce the more gruesome aspects of the news, also diminished the essentially descriptive function of news writing. El Universal and Excélsior, founded as business enterprises, could not afford to ignore the profitability of meeting public demands, but they also wished to maintain their stature as responsible, creditable newspapers. They met their predicament in two ways. Both dailies included a section on sensationalist news, but relegated it to a position of secondary importance by placing it on the first page of the second section. Furthermore, both published supplementary editions in which they acceded fully to the graphic sensationalism sought by the public: thus Excélsior engendered Ultimas Noticias while El Universal circulated El Universal Gráfico.<sup>32</sup>



In accordance with Reyes Spíndola's principles, news reports and informative articles continued to be the foundation of newspaper content in that era. Nonetheless, editorial comment remained an important aspect of any worthwhile newspaper, as Henry Lepidus explained:

In general, the Mexican newspapers have combined the American and Mexican fashions of journalism. Following the American policy, the news is given the position of greatest prominence--but it is generally editorialized and this is predominantly a feature of Mexican journalism of the past century. One of the inside pages, often the third, is devoted to editorials. Some people claim that the editorial page is still the most important in Mexican newspapers, but the accuracy of this statement is open to serious questioning. However, it is doubtless true that in Mexico, as throughout Latin America, the editorial occupies a place of greater importance and prestige than it does in most American newspapers.<sup>33</sup>

Editorial opinions complemented the presentation of news through analysis of current events and social concerns. Consequently, even the most sensationalist newspapers had an editorial section to comment upon the same social shortcomings (prostitution, alcoholism, crime) that they so descriptively documented in the news columns. In the post-Revolutionary era, editorials also displayed a frequent ideological focus on all aspects of the conflict, as much on the military triumph of the movement as on the evolution and progress of its fundamental motivations and the attainment of its educational, political and social programs. With such a heavy emphasis on historical events and national development, it is not surprising that Mexican journalism was deeply patriotic. Between 1920 and 1930





international events received only scant attention in Mexican newspapers since foreign activities could only be of secondary importance until the untried, ideological innovations of the revolutionaries had been fully implemented. By 1930, however, Mexican newspapers had once again begun to reflect a greater international awareness and to discuss pertinent world concerns. The 1929 crash of the stock market led to an internationally depressed economy which affected Mexico as dramatically as any nation; at the same time, the widespread distrust of international communism was strongly evident among the majority of Mexican politicians, an attitude extensively endorsed by national newspapers. In other areas, Mexico could hardly remain aloof from the deteriorating situation in Europe as it watched Italy's militant expansionism in Africa and the progress of the Spanish Civil War, events climaxing in 1939 with the outbreak of World War II. Nonetheless, Mexican journalists did not concern themselves to the full with international implications of such issues, but evaluated them in terms of their effect on Mexico and its post-Revolutionary development. The influence of Communism, for instance, was seen as a decidedly national threat, and the essentially conservative tendencies prevalent in Mexico were reflected in the strongly defensive stand of the newspapers against 'comunistoides' and 'bolcheviques'.

The political inclination of most Mexican newspapers continued to be based on the established tradition of adhering to one or another of the political factions. The directors of Excélsior were perhaps the most conscientious in seeking to



maintain a balanced, uncompromised position, dedicated to direct and objective news reporting. However, the more radical political perspectives were well represented by newspapers, even if one considers only those publications that occupied a justifiable position of national importance. El Nacional Revolucionario best exemplified the extremes of leftist, pro-government newspapers. As the official voice of the "Partido Nacional Revolucionario", it concentrated on providing a complete justification of the socialist objectives of the Party and on defending the actions and achievements of the Revolutionary government. Its most able opponent among the conservative, reactionary publications was Omega, an oppositionist newspaper characterized by its rabidly, anti-socialist attitude and its support of everything opposed to the federal government.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, whatever the perspective or format of any of the post-Revolutionary newspapers, there is no doubt that journalism as a whole had evolved significantly as a result of the prolonged, national crisis: "...los mismos periódicos políticos como los informativos, han prosperado y son ahora en grande número, unos viviendo de los partidos políticos que los alimentan, otros medrando como grandes industrias, sostenidos por fuertes capitales y formando ricas empresas. Todos han tenido que servir de vehículo a las ideas revolucionarias, ya sosteniéndolas o atacándolas."<sup>35</sup>

Within the context of this evolution, literature had suffered a setback. El Universal and Excelsior led the trend to eliminate literary material from informative journalism, leaving





such features specifically to literary reviews and other specialized magazines. Accordingly, both dailies had ceased to serialize novels after 1920. Sunday supplements continued to accept literary collaborations, usually short stories, poems and chronicles, but these too were yielding to the tendency to focus their content on general interest articles and on aspects of national culture. By 1940 these magazines were devoid of literature as such. In its place, editors offered a weekly comic section, photographic essays recording current events and human interest happenings, popular interest features, and perhaps several short stories, preferably about detectives, cowboys or romance to provide an element of light entertainment. Newspapers were also beginning to exploit the use of daily comic strips. These were of two types: regular, simple comic strips; and illustrated, captioned stories, in which every two or three sentences of narrative were depicted through a drawing. The best examples of the latter type appeared in El Universal Gráfico, which from 1937 onwards adapted Edgar Rice Burroughs' series of novels about Tarzan (Tarzán y los hombres elefantes, Tarzán y los fuegos de Tohr).

Serialized novels 'per se' did not disappear completely from newspapers, but their ascendancy had passed. Newspapers no longer pretended to publish new novelists or follow literary trends; the criterion for the publication of any novel was that it entertain the reader. Consequently, the works chosen were frequently those of outdated but ever popular novelists, such as Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and Manuel Paynó. In



1922, when El Heraldó de México serialized Alexandre Dumas' Los tres mosqueteros, it declared it to be "para solaz y encanto de nuestros lectores". Similarly, on February 19, 1923 the editors of Omega, in reply to reader demands, announced: "MUY IMPORTANTE / Multitud de lectores de Omega nos han pedido...que demos en folletín alguna novela de estilo moderno y de carácter esencialmente recreativo. Tenemos el mayor placer en obsequiar los deseos de nuestros lectores" (p. 4). Omega subsequently published El Baúl de Piratas, "Humorismo, misterio, crimen, aventura... Un puñado de cuentos selectos."

This light reading did not constitute serialized publication in its entirety. The more committed newspapers felt it imperative to instruct the reader instead of merely entertaining him, and serialized narratives that focused on current political and social concerns. Such works had two basic formats, either the essay written to provide concise commentary and analysis, or the literary narrative whereby ideas were most frequently communicated by means of a biography or autobiography. There was also a sort of 'cuasi-folletín', serialized contributions composed of related articles dealing with a central theme, but not published with any fixed regularity. They were not purely narrative but often consisted of commentaries, explanations or evaluations of specific situations or concerns, either of current interest or of historical significance.<sup>36</sup>





From the preceding outline of the development of Mexican journalism, it is evident that there existed a continuous relationship between the newspaper and literature. The association was by no means constant nor immutable, but was subject to the changes that affected journalism as it evolved from its initially subjective and literary style to its modern standards of objective, informative news reporting. To a certain degree, it might be legitimate to speak of journalism as an offshoot of literature, in as much as its style and characteristics in the XIXth century were established through the collaboration of novelists, poets, and essayists who frequently served as directors or editors, or who founded their own newspapers. On the basis of editorial needs and as a matter of convenience, newspapers and magazines soon became the most suitable vehicle for the dissemination of literature and the most appropriate means of livelihood for writers. Consequently, a condition of mutual dependence was established between the two genres. Nevertheless, journalism was also in a state of evolution, guided by the developments of European and North American models upon which it was based. Hence, as it became independent of literature, it developed a distinct identity and separate characteristics designed to meet the demands imposed by its function of direct, informative communication.

The relationship between the novel and the newspaper, as the focus of our attention in the following chapters, must be evaluated with reference to the evolution of journalism over this period. Initially, we must take into account the fact that



many of the novelists whose work we will study also wrote as journalists (see Appendix B). As a result, it is possible that compositions they produced for one of the genres may have been influenced by their experience in the other. Another important consideration must be the fact that the most critical stages in the evolution of journalism, including the fulfillment of its independence from literature, took place within the fifty years between 1890 and 1940, the period with which our study deals. In fact, both genres changed simultaneously as a reaction to the new demands imposed by historical circumstances and the transformation of the social order; as such, the changes transpiring between the last years of the 'Porfirista' dictatorship and the post-Revolutionary epoch could not but be reflected in the content and form of the newspaper and the novel. Both registered the same general concerns, a relationship that provides another possible connection between the two genres. Above all, it is necessary to bear in mind the growing tendency in journalism to inform about daily events in a direct, objective style. This trend, which received its initial impetus in 1896 and a secondary impulse in 1920, responded to the growing demand for impartial communication on events of national importance. We have yet to see if the novel, experiencing the same pressures, also acceded to the same tendencies.





## Notes

<sup>1</sup>For a general history of Mexican journalism, see José Bravo Ugarte, Periodistas y periódicos mexicanos: Hasta 1935 (México: Ed. Jus, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Luis Urbina, La vida literaria de México (Madrid: Imprenta Hermanos Saez, 1917), pp. 106-107. A detailed study of the literary content of the Diario de México can be found in Ruth Rexroat, "The 'Diario de México', First Daily of New Spain: Its Literature", Ph. D. Thesis, University of Texas (Austin), 1956.

<sup>3</sup>Between 1810 and 1814 some of the most important political newspapers of the period were published. Among them were El Despertador Americano of Francisco Severo Maldonado; El Ilustrador Nacional of José María Cos; El Pensador Mexicano of J. J. Fernández de Lizardi; El Ilustrador Americano and El Semanario Patriótico, both instruments of Andrés Quintana Roo.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley Ross, Fuentes de la historia contemporánea de México: periódicos y revistas (Guanaajuato: El Colegio de México, 1965), I, p. xv. Other critics have corroborated this trend toward political and social content. In the opinion of R. Amorós, "...periódicos, hojas sueltas y todo género de impresos eran espejo fiel de las inquietudes sociales" ("La evolución del periodismo mexicano", El Nacional, April 23, 1950).

<sup>5</sup>Mario Rojas Avendaño, "El periodismo", México: 50 años de Revolución, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962), Vol. IV, p. 566.

<sup>6</sup>A more expanded list should also include Ignacio Ramírez, Justo Sierra, José T. Cuéllar, Juan de Dios Peza, Hilario Frías y Soto, Agustín Gutiérrez Nájera, and Carlos Díaz Dufoo. José Luis Martínez writes, "...en nuestro siglo XIX la mayoría de nuestros escritores eran periodistas y para los periódicos y revistas literarias escribieron muchas de las obras que hoy consideramos memorables" (La expresión nacional: letras mexicanas del siglo XIX, México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1955, p. 87).

<sup>7</sup>"Si prescindimos de sus obras en verso, el estilo de Lizardi es uniforme y presenta las mismas características en su labor periodística, en los folletos y en las novelas" (Manuel Pedro González, Trayectoria de la novela en México, México: Ed. Botas, 1951, p. 29).

<sup>8</sup>Enrique de Olavarria y Ferrari, El arte literario en México (Madrid: 1878), p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>For numerous critics this production must constitute an





essential facet of any complete, valid evaluation of Mexican literature. For example, J. L. Martínez argued that, "A partir de [1817] puede afirmarse que, cuando menos, la mitad de la literatura mexicana está, más que contenida, olvidada en periódicos y revistas cuyo volumen es impresionante y cuyo contenido es la expresión más justa de nuestra vida literaria" (La expresión nacional...siglo XIX, p. 82).

<sup>10</sup>For a summary of prevailing conditions see Stanley Ross, Fuentes de la historia contemporánea de México..., Vol. I, p. vii.

<sup>11</sup>Fortino Ibarra de Anda, El periodismo en México (México: Imprenta Mundial, 1934), pp. 39-40.

<sup>12</sup>John S. Brushwood, Mexico in Its Novel: A Nation's Search for Identity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), p. 105.

<sup>13</sup>Mario Castro Arenas, El periodismo y la novela contemporánea (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1969), p. 81. F. Ibarra de Anda reiterated Castro Arenas' view, declaring that journalism in the last century "fué patrimonio de los letrados...conceptuoso, literario y lleno de artículos pesados" (El periodismo en México, p. 39). The situation in Europe and, especially, in the United States contrasted sharply with Mexico. In the XIXth century America witnessed the founding of the The Sun and The Herald, papers with wide distribution and ample focus on human interest and sensationalist news items. The difference between North American and Mexican journalism in that era was based primarily on the fact that the former were managed as business enterprises and could count on a much larger, literate public.

<sup>14</sup>According to Andrés Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro, "no sólo fueron nuestros periódicos de carácter informativo, sino tendenciosos en su aspecto ideológico. Y no parecerá extraño que el periodismo de nuestros países haya adquirido su máximo impulso en los días en que éstos bregaban por su independencia y, en épocas posteriores, cada vez que una gran aspiración sacude y estremece el alma popular" (Periodismo y periodistas en Hispano América, México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1947, pp. 8-9).

<sup>15</sup>Boyd G. Carter, Las revistas literarias de Hispanoamérica, Col. Studium, No 24 (México: Ed. de Andrea, 1959), pp. 16-17.

<sup>16</sup>For a further corroboration of this opinion, see A. Henestrosa and J. A. Fernández de Castro, Periodismo y periodistas en Hispano América, pp. 131 and 132.

<sup>17</sup>As an almost immediate consequence of El Imparcial's appearance, the old, liberal standardbearers, El Siglo XIX and El Monitor Republicano, disappeared from the scene. They could





not compete with the new, mechanical improvements, nor the reduction in price, and were forced to close in 1896.

<sup>18</sup>"Aquella función decisiva que tuvieron los escritores literarios en el periodismo en el siglo XIX va a modificarse radicalmente en nuestro siglo, y concretamente a partir de la modernización que inició en sus periódicos Rafael Reyes Spíndola en 1896. Los periódicos actuales están redactados, en su parte principal informativa, por periodistas especializados, mientras que los escritores como tales sólo participan en las páginas editoriales. Desaparece, por tanto, aquel tipo de periódicos del siglo XIX que son depósito inagotable de literatura y discusión política, ya que para la literatura se crearán publicaciones especializadas" (J. L. Martínez, De la naturaleza y carácter de la literatura mexicana, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960, p. 29).

<sup>19</sup>It must be noted that such political articles and discussions were not actively related to any imminent, revolutionary threat in Mexico. The controversy dealt almost exclusively with the situation in Russia, against which the political and social reality of Mexico could be favourably contrasted.

<sup>20</sup>Francisco Zamora, A un joven periodista mexicano (México: Porrúa, 1969), p. 36.

<sup>21</sup>The consequent lack of creditable and reliable reporting was quickly noted among foreign observers, and is to be seen in an article about the disorders in Mexico that appeared on December 19, 1910, in the Kölnische Zeitung. It placed the blame for the incredible news items about the Revolution on the sensationalist and politically biased interests controlling each region: "Estas publicaciones casi nadan en sangre, en parte debido al dinero que ganan con estas noticias entre los crédulos hambrientos de sensacionalismo que forman el público más fácilmente excitable, y también debido a que detrás de ellas se encuentran la mano de los revolucionarios" (Translated by Jesús Monjarás Ruiz, Los primeros días de la Revolución: testimonios periodísticos alemanes, México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1975, p. 121).

<sup>22</sup>One of the most immediate impressions derived from a reading of México Nuevo is that, in spite of its political tendencies and the pressures imposed by the national situation, it was able to maintain a controlled tone of unbiased evaluation. Its criticism of the "porfiristas" and the conservative elements was incisive, and often biting, but never violent nor unfair. This was due to the character of its editor, Juan Sánchez Azcona, who was an acknowledged enemy of yellow journalism and of those that took their duties and behaviour lightly.





<sup>23</sup>An excellent example of the emotional and subjective style typical of the newspapers of that time is found in the sensationalist report in the November 15th edition of El Liberal (the name adopted by El Imparcial when Carranza entered the capital) in 1914: "HUBO TERRIBLE CHOQUE SOBRE LA VIA NACIONAL / En la mañana del viernes, minutos después de las diez, y ante un hermoso paisaje, palpitante de vida, dos trenes, como monstruos apocalípticos, guiados por una soberbia de fuerza y poder, se acometieron fieramente, hasta el aniquilamiento, sembrando a su alrededor la desolación y la muerte" (p. 1).

<sup>24</sup>México Nuevo (1919-1920) and El Demócrata (1914-1926) are good examples of political journalism. In the case of the former, this is demonstrated in its articles and editorials as well as in the following serialized novels: La lucha interna: actuación política y militar del General de División Pablo González, by Professor Mateo de León Ochoa; El problema agrario y el Artículo 27 de la Constitución de Querétaro by Antonio Sala; El 'Sistema Sala', concerning the division of the great estates. El Demócrata, although to a lesser degree, also sought to reinforce the Revolutionary program. Its editorial of September 17, 1914 is quite typical: "La Revolución es justa y necesaria, extirpa y crea; es fuego que devora y luz que ilumina; antorcha y crisol" (p. 3). In its "folletines" it accepted essays such as Abrirse paso: principios generales sobre Educación Colectiva (1916) written in English by Orion Sweat Marden and adapted to the Mexican Revolution by Rafael Téllez Girón.

<sup>25</sup>Among the Mexican newspapers of the time most noted for their international politics were: La Actualidad (1914-1918), a magazine of Le Courrier du Mexique favouring the Allied position; Deutsche-Zeitung von Mexiko (1916-1917), an irregularly published magazine of pro-German propaganda; Informaciones inalámbricas (1916-1919), a daily reporting mainly international news, edited by the German News Service; El Universal which took a generally pro-Allied stance; Excelsior which favoured the Germans; and El Demócrata, controlled by interests of the Central European Empires and bitingly anti-American in its views.

<sup>26</sup>Even in Excelsior, perhaps the best newspaper of the period with respect to style and tone, there were examples of this kind of reporting. One such was its news item of June 23, 1919, concerning a woman killed by her lover: "El nuevo Oteló, no teniendo a la mano otro instrumento de muerte que una navaja de afeitar, destrozó la garganta de la infeliz hasta casi desprender la cabeza del tronco, y descargó tajos a diestra y siniestra sobre las alabastrinas carnes, abriendo anchas heridas que, como rojas amapolas esmaltaban la tersa piel, haciendo brotar la sangre a raudales" (p. 1).

<sup>27</sup>Although it was certainly not the model followed by all





newspapers, El Demócrata was a prime example of this development: in 1914 it published a page entitled "Amenidades de los lunes"; by 1916 this had been transformed into a Sunday section "Clarines y tambores", which had given way to a complete Sunday supplement by 1918.

<sup>28</sup>W. Williams and F. L. Martin, The Practice of Journalism: A Treatise on Newspaper Making (Columbia, Missouri: E. W. Stephens, 1911), pp. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup>Jefferson R. Spell, "Mexican Literary Periodicals of the XXth Century", PMLA, LIV, No 3, September, 1939, p. 842.

<sup>30</sup>Henry Lepidus, Historia del periodismo mexicano, quoted by María del Carmen Ruiz Castañeda, et al, El periodismo en México: 450 años de historia (México: Edición Tradición, 1974), pp. 265-266.

<sup>31</sup>In his study of El periodismo en México (pp. 93-94), F. Ibarra de Anda classified five types of journalism:

- a) "el informativo", usually a daily or weekly;
- b) "el doctrinario", commenting upon events and developments, but a class that is relatively unimportant in Mexico;
- c) "el técnico", for example the Boletín Financiero;
- d) "la revista", "el género ideal de periódico ...porque abarca todas las ramas y formas del periodismo";
- e) "el magazine", "los periódicos que sólo tienen anuncio directo o en forma de reclamo, simulando historietas o artículos literarios o científicos."

<sup>32</sup>Although several of these sensationalist publications used the established form of the daily (Ultimas Noticias, El Demócrata, El Popular), the majority preferred the more usual mode of this type of journalism, namely the tabloid. Notable among such newspapers were El Gráfico, La Prensa and El Universal Gráfico.

<sup>33</sup>Henry Lepidus, The History of Mexican Journalism, published in The University of Missouri Bulletin, Vol. 29, No 4, 1928, p. 77.

<sup>34</sup>The oppositionist and anti-Revolutionary attitude of Omega was confirmed in the editorial with which it began its second period of publication in 1928 (having been closed down previously by the government). Its objective was to fight against "todas las inmoralidades, injusticias, atropellos, infamias y demás en que han abundado los regimenes revolucionarios, a partir del carrancismo inolvidable hasta los gloriosos días corrientes..." (December 10, 1928, p. 1). In 1935





it denounced socialism, whose sinister influences it detected in the 'shameful' fact that sex education was being offered in the schools. On July 4th of that same year it clearly bore witness to its extreme reactionary sentiment by commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the death of Porfirio Díaz: "...[el 2 de julio de 1915] falleció en París el genial estadista, el patricio y gran soldado de la República, el heroico paladín de nuestra segunda Independencia.... Porfirio Díaz, ese hombre glorioso, cuya vida es una leyenda hecha realidad, aunque parezca fábula" (p. 1). Its format also resembled somewhat that of the XIXth century since it gave predominance to editorial articles and subjective evaluations.

<sup>35</sup>Jesús S. Soto, "Arte y revolución", *Crisol*, Año I, Vol. II (December 1929), p. 394.

<sup>36</sup>The "folletines" covered a wide spectrum of topics. Among serialized novels published to provide light entertainment were: F. A. Ponson du Terrail, La juventud de Enrique IV (*El Ilustrado*, 1938); Manuel Payón, Los bandidos del Río Frío (*El Demócrata*, 1926), and El pistol del diablo (*Omega*, 1928-1929); Alexandre Dumas, Los tres mosqueteros (*El Herald de México*, 1922); Sir Walter Scott, Ivanhoe (*El Mundo*, 1923); Victor Hugo, Los noventa y tres (*Omega*, 1941).

The "folletines" offered as examples of socially committed works can be divided into two classes. There were those that treated current themes and problems in a non-literary fashion: James M. Callahan, La política yanqui contra México (*El Gráfico*, 1933); R. Rojina Villegas, Bienes, derechos reales y posesión and Derecho hereditario o sucesiones (*El Nacional*, 1942); and there were serialized narratives which detailed contemporary problems but developed them within a literary form: Guillermo Martínez, La verídica historia de Pancho Villa (*El Mundo*, 1923; published after Villa's assassination); Genaro Saide, El señor diputado (*Omega*, 1926; based on the Revolution); Rafael Martínez, Salvase el que pueda: los días de la Revolución huertista (*El Gráfico*, 1931); Erich María Remarque, El regreso (*El Gráfico*, 1931); Jan Valtin, La noche quedó atrás (*La Prensa*, 1941).

The "cuasi-folletines" were not simple narratives, but rather commentaries and explanations offered in a somewhat personal tone and usually centred on Revolutionary figures: Memorias de los dorados (*Heraldo de México*, 1923); Javier Campos Ponce, La vida azarosa de Sandino (*La Prensa*, 1929), dealing with the Revolutionary leader Augusto César Sandino; Juan Berragán, De las memorias de Venustiano Carranza (*El Universal*, 1930), mainly discussing social themes; General Gildardo Magaña, Emiliano Zapata y el agrarismo mexicano (*El Nacional*, 1933); Martínez Mancera, La triste vida de un hombre que no fue a la escuela (*El Universal Gráfico*, 1934). However, there were also narratives about events of general and historical interest as well, as in Leon Trotsky's El trágico fin de los últimos Romanoffs (*Excelsior*, 1931).





### III

#### Journalism and the Novel from 1890 to 1912

For a variety of reasons, the Mexican novel began to flourish in the second half of the nineteenth century. Initially, this was the result of efforts by Ignacio Manuel Altamirano and his contemporaries to create a strong, national literature; but it was also fostered by foreign literary influences, and by stable political conditions. Tracing the development of the novel, Adalbert Dessau concluded,

...puede decirse acerca de la evolución de la novela mexicana en el siglo XIX, que sobre los fundamentos de la novela plebeya y popular creada por Lizardi, se efectuó, en íntima conexión con el desarrollo social de México, un proceso global y único. En su curso, la descripción costumbrista de la vida en el país, --lograda mediante un esquema de composición biográfica o autobiográfica, o por medio de una historia de amor más o menos irrelevante--se desarrolló hasta convertirse en descripción crítica de esta vida, según una teoría determinada. A fines de la época de Díaz existían una al lado de otra, todas estas formas de la narrativa mexicana.<sup>1</sup>

All the well known '-isms' of the century were part of this evolution: 'costumbrismo', romanticism, sentimentalism, realism, naturalism, and modernism. Regardless of the differences inherent among these tendencies, the majority of novelists of the 'Porfirista' era shared important characteristics: in



accordance with the classical tenet of educating while entertaining, their works were generally didactic; they sought to portray the country and its customs; and they fomented patriotism. At the same time, however, the multiplicity of forms and styles makes the relationship between the novel and journalism difficult to evaluate. In order to facilitate our discussion, we have identified three significant categories: novels by writers, usually members of the ruling oligarchy, whose training as men of letters led them to foster the creation of literature; novels by members of the liberal opposition, usually works of second and third rate quality; and novels by writers whose main interest was to produce light, escapist reading.

The outstanding novelists of the first group were Federico Gamboa, Rafael Delgado and José López-Portillo y Rojas. These writers sought to create works of aesthetic merit by emphasizing the importance of style and the formal aspects of literary composition. Their view of literature derived from European sources, in particular from the realist and naturalist movements of France and Spain. Their themes, however, were generally based on national concerns, frequently on an examination of the customs or the problems and vices of both rural and urban life. Yet, because these writers were closely identified with the ruling oligarchy of Díaz's Mexico, they lacked the perspective and motivation to criticize prevailing social conditions comprehensively. In fact, realists such as José López-Portillo y Rojas and Rafael Delgado kept social criticism to a minimum. As





a typical member of the group, Delgado warned the reader in the prologue to Angelina: "Tampoco busques en los capitulejos que vas a leer 'hondas trascendencias' y problemas al uso. No entiendo tamañas 'sabidurías', y aunque de ellas supiera me guardaría de ponerlas en novela."<sup>2</sup> The naturalist writers, in particular Federico Gamboa and Angel de Campo, were often more openly critical of contemporary conditions but, in accordance with the precepts of Naturalism, focused on the foibles of human nature in general and not on Mexican society in particular. On account of their social perspectives, the works of these novelists were imbued with a sense of optimism, implicitly or explicitly stated, concerning progress and social improvement in the nation. In their opinion, progress could be realized through the efficacy of the Catholic faith, dedication to work, and the strength of the Christian family.

Critics generally agree that the writers in this group were the most adept and significant novelists of the pre-Revolutionary period. This evaluation is based primarily on their talents and ability to write novels which, if not of international rank, were vastly superior to those of their immediate predecessors. To a great extent, their success was the natural consequence of their era and their enjoyment of certain advantages that fostered their literary production:

No one can dispute the statement that during the long rule of Porfirio Díaz Mexican literature flowered. In the novel alone we have the eminent figures of Emilio Rabasa, José López-Portillo y Rojas, Rafael Delgado, Federico Gamboa and others. They enjoyed the use of government press, official subsidies, and the counsel of such



respected intellectuals as Justo Sierra. There was an intelligent and unoccupied upper class to read and appreciate novels written in elegant prose. Writers, like Gamboa, employed by the federal government, had leisure to write; they travelled abroad on diplomatic and other official missions and came in contact with French and English writers. Writers enjoyed a privileged place in Díaz's Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

The second group of writers active at this time were generally inferior, but offered a more realistic portrayal of Mexican life and appealed more directly to the sense of patriotism of the masses. Politically, most of them were allied with the liberal cause which opposed Porfirio Díaz. Accordingly, they depicted the political and social injustices undermining society, and the vulnerability of the nation, betrayed by opportunists and controlled by foreign interests. As a remedy to this situation, they sought to define the essence of national identity and to chart a return to a just, democratic government.<sup>4</sup> This group of writers contrasted sharply with the establishment novelists, as J. L. Martínez indicated:

...existió...vigorosa corriente, representada por nuestros grandes novelistas de fines del siglo XIX, que afirmó la lealtad a lo nacional y que se preocupó por la vida de nuestro pueblo. Al mismo tiempo, frente al coro de los panegiristas de la dictadura, se mantuvo, para honra de nuestra conciencia cívica, otra corriente ideológica en pro de los derechos cívicos y de la justicia social, que se manifestó no solamente en reflexiones sociológicas y en el periodismo político, sino también en algunas obras literarias: novelas, cuentos y dramas en los que se denunciaban las opresiones que sufrían los humildes y se satirizaban los procedimientos políticos de la dictadura.<sup>5</sup>

Although the liberal writers condemned the misery of the down-





trodden, the abuse of power prevalent in government, the extent of foreign influence in the country, and the lack of traditional values in Mexican society, it is interesting to note that direct criticism of President Porfirio Díaz was a rare occurrence, owing in part to the danger involved in hazarding such a thing, and in part to the fact that many of these novelists did not want to overthrow the present system as such, but simply to eliminate its injustices.

Within the ranks of the opposition novelists there existed two fundamental tendencies. The first is exemplified by the naturalist writer Heriberto Frías. His themes are a bitter denunciation of the state of Mexican society and the faults of the government, but his style demonstrated an awareness and appreciation of European literary trends. On the other hand, novelists such as Porfirio Parra, Carlos Ioro, Salvador Ouevedo y Zubieta and Manuel H. San Juan, while aligned with Heriberto Frías with respect to their 'costumbrista' elements and vociferous opposition to the political 'status quo', never affiliated themselves with any specific literary movement or style. Generally speaking, the opposition novelists were second rate,<sup>6</sup> due partly to lack of training and to pressures which subordinated artistry to social criticism

The novelists of the last of the three categories referred to earlier produced works noteworthy for their aesthetic qualities. Members of this group were chiefly influenced by Modernism, a movement which, although finding its best expression in poetry, contributed significantly to the novel.



Amado Nervo was Mexico's most important representative of Modernist prose, and produced works remarkable for their combination of exoticism, linguistic refinement and emotional sensitivity.

Although the novelists of these three groups followed distinct paths, they shared a common trait in as much as practically all of them played some role in journalism. The major novelists, such as Gamboa, Delgado and López-Portillo, either collaborated in literary reviews or worked as literary journalists by contributing extracts of their works to newspapers (see Appendix A). The same tendency predominated among the modernist novelists such as Amado Nervo and Laura Méndez de Cuenca. On the other hand, the opposition novelists, although frequently contributing articles, chronicles and even poetry to the various newspapers and magazines, generally associated with journalism in its more informative or technical aspects since the majority worked as editors, writers and reporters, or, more significantly, were founders, owners or directors of important dailies and weeklies. This intimate relationship is indicative of a degree of interchange between journalism and the novel in that period, although to appreciate its full extent, it is necessary to examine the basic structure of the newspapers after 1890.

At that time, all newspapers conformed to an accepted standard: they were printed on a single sheet, folded in half to comprise four pages,<sup>7</sup> and the composition of each page corresponded to a fairly rigid format. Thus, part of the first





page was devoted to an editorial or daily commentary, written by the 'boletinista' (editorialist) or by the director of the newspaper. This page, and the major part of the second, were completed with news reports and articles contributed by reporters, correspondents and collaborators who analyzed the important events of the day or discussed topics of special interest. Since almost all these writers had a literary preparation or vocation, it was natural that their contributions should contain subjective evaluation and be developed according to literary principles. On the third or fourth page, the newspapers offered more directly informative sections. These consisted of 'la gacetilla', short news items concerning important or sensational events of local or national significance, and the cablegrammes, explicit summaries of international events. These two sections were the only parts of the newspaper that conformed to current notions of journalistic form, namely, rapid, direct recounting of important, political social and human-interest happenings. In addition to these elements, almost every newspaper reserved several columns for literature, and published either poems, short stories and "leyendas", or a serialized novel.<sup>8</sup> After 1895, the serialized novel was increasingly prevalent and promptly became the only regular daily 'literary' content of the newspaper. Other literary contributions were confined to the Sunday or Monday editions, which gradually took on the shape of the literary supplement. It must be noted, however, that even when later reforms of the newspapers completed the separation of the



'informative' press from literary magazines, the serialized novel or "feuilleton" continued to appear as an integral part of the daily's content.

The practice of publishing novels in the newspaper was not an innovation of the Mexican press, but had been established years before in Europe and the United States. Yet, it is reasonable to ask what might be the effects of this practice on the style and themes of a novel intended for publication in this manner. Emil Dovifat felt that "la novela es en sí un material ajeno al periódico; su forma épica contradice la vida dramática de éste; sobre todo, el reparto de la lectura en porciones. No son razones políticas ni siquiera literarias, sino económicas las que la trajeron al periódico."<sup>9</sup> If a novel is published serially in the newspaper, then, according to Dovifat, it necessarily must have certain characteristics to make it conform to the requirements of its medium:

Muchos afirman que no existe una verdadera novela de periódico (o 'folletín'). La cuestión puede ser muy debatida en cuanto a su aspecto literario, pero no por lo que afecta al periodístico. Como todo cuanto toca, el periódico se ha apropiado también de la novela y la ha penetrado toda su esencia. Primeramente la acomodó a su propia manera de publicación. No requiere un tratamiento amplio sino un movimiento en ondas cortas ('una sucesión de períodos muy cortos y regulares'). Además, necesita una actualidad evidente, o que por lo menos se acomode a su época y a las tareas que ésta requiere ('el acontecimiento más reciente') y finalmente y en la mayoría de los casos un material de interés general ('el público más amplio') para dar satisfacción a los deseos de un círculo de lectores lo más extenso posible. (El Periodismo, pp. 69-70)

The three essential characteristics mentioned by Dovifat provide





a good basis for examining the types of 'folletines' published in the national newspapers between 1890 and 1912; these same requirements also provide an initial basis for evaluating the relationship between journalism and the novel in the same period.

Newspaper directors tended to select novels for serialization on the basis of their entertainment value, in order to ensure that the readers would continue to subscribe to the paper. Consequently, novels were chosen to suit a wide range of contemporary tastes. Works of the Romantic novelists were always popular, and included European (Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue) as well as South American writers (José Mármol, Jorge Isaacs). Naturalist novels, particularly of Alphonse Daudet and Emile Zola, were popular with some readers, while other subscribers demanded more overtly escapist reading such as the fantastic adventures of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells and the detective stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. Occasionally, the newspapers published more recent novels, provided that they were popular with the readers; the most frequent among these were the works of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and Oscar Wilde. Evidently, the principal European novelists who were in fashion at the time were most regularly serialized, although other minor European authors such as J. A. Ponson du Terrail, Carolina Invernizio and Carlota Braemé, whose works enjoyed immense popularity, were often featured as well in Mexican dailies. This was particularly true of the more conservative newspapers as they attempted to avoid the political compromise characteristic



of the more liberal press. Newspaper directors did not overlook Mexican novelists by any means; the more conservative, 'porfirista' periodicals presented the works of traditionalist and popular writers such as Amado Nervo, Juan A. Mateos, Ireneo Paz and Laura Méndez de Cuenca (see Appendix B). On the other hand, the opposition publications often chose novels that coincided with their own liberal principles, especially the works of José Ferrel, Manuel H. San Juan and Heriberto Frías. It is interesting to note that the majority of the major Mexican writers of that period, namely Federico Gamboa, José López-Portillo y Rojas and Emilio Rabasa, generally did not serialize their works in newspapers; either they introduced their novels in literary magazines<sup>10</sup> or published them immediately in book form. In later years, the liberal novelists also began to publish their works independently of the newspapers, a tendency exemplified by Mariano Azuela, Salvador Quevedo y Zubieta and Porfirio Parra. With such a trend, European novels tended to predominate even more in the conservative newspapers, while, in the years preceding the Revolution, the opposition press increasingly abandoned publication of novels. Liberal journalists preferred to devote the space to direct social and political comment, usually in editorial observations, although also in the form of serialized essays. Thus, in 1909, Nuevo Mundo published a "Folletín político", Cuestiones electorales, by the congressman Manuel Calero. Even so, Calero was one of the few serialized writers who wrote on contemporary matters. Contrary to the condition stipulated by Dovifat, the majority of





newspaper subscribers shunned compositions that elaborated current or topical problems. They demanded instead light, escapist novels or sentimental, exotic narratives. Newspaper editors, keenly aware of this preference, subordinated the requirement to inform or influence on current events to the need to entertain the reader in order to retain his subscription.

If we examine closely how novels were serialized in the newspapers it is clear that they were not patterned after the "sucesión de períodos muy cortos y regulares" stressed by Dovifat. Novels were published by octavos so that the reader could collect the whole work and have it bound free of charge by the newspaper when the serial was finished. In fact, the criterion for regulating serial presentation was founded on the economic concerns of the newspaper management, which sought to attract as large a reading public as possible. Even in later years when revolutionary fervour became increasingly pronounced and editors often abandoned the serial in order to provide space for more relevant matters such as social comment and propaganda, newspapers that continued to publish novels still promoted entertaining narratives to meet the demand of the majority of the subscribers for uncommitted, enjoyable material. Hence, the only one of Dovifat's points relevant to the Mexican press was that which demanded that the material be of the greatest interest to the largest readership. It is clear that journalism did not affect the novel's essential style and content in the way Dovifat affirmed. Consequently, in order to reach reliable conclusions on the effective interaction of the two genres, it



will be necessary to analyse them using other criteria; thematic and stylistic relationships provide a conventional basis for this purpose.

The thematic outlook of most novelists was to some extent the result of their political bias, developed in accordance either with the conservative ideal of maintaining the 'status quo', or liberal tendencies directed against established authority and traditional social values. The way in which the role of the Church and religion in Mexico was evaluated is an excellent example of how a common theme could be treated from opposing frames of reference. The 'liberal' novelists generally accepted that religion had a place in Mexican society but rejected the excesses of both its supporters and detractors. In La Guerra de tres años (1891) Emilio Rabasa satirized the antagonism between 'devout', conservative Catholics, who demanded their traditional authority and prerogatives, and the free-thinking, anti-ecclesiastical liberals, who tenaciously supported the laws enacted against the Church during the War of Reform. José Ferrel similarly scoffed at the immoderate fanatics portrayed in his Reproducciones (1895). For their part, 'liberal' newspapers also tended to be critical of the Church and its attempt to regain lost powers. A typical example is to be found in La Patria in an announcement that noted that "Doña Guadalupe Bros...dejó grandes sumas para la iglesia, es decir, para la engorda de los holgazanes" (July 19, 1892, p. 3). Naturally, religion also had its defenders, both among novelists and journalists. In his works, Federico Gamboa moralized on the





efficacy of religion as the salvation of Mankind and the solace of his existence. Similarly, Rafael Delgado dramatized the consolations of Catholicism and its power to help believers, particularly in the provinces, where devotion and simple faith were strongest:

...fue levantada tal iglesia por el esfuerzo heroico de una asociación sin capitales, tan piadosa y constante como generosa y tenaz; no busquéis allí primores de arquitectura ni célebres lienzos de afamados autores; pedidle decoro y aseo, elegancia cristiana y modesto esplendor, que todo esto puede daros merced a la piedad de quienes en tal sitio concurren, y gracias a la dulzura, al talento y al buen gusto y economía de los padres capellanes, todos ellos varones apostólicos, entre los cuales han contado los hijos de Pluviosilla, doctísimos y muy santos sacerdotes.

.....

El mes de María lleva a templo tan bello inusitadas pompas. Cualquiera diría que con ellas van todas las gardenias de Villaverde y todos los lirios y azucenas de Pluviosilla. Pero Santa Marta, tan risueña y lucida en tales fiestas, tórnase adusta y severa en tiempos cuaresmales, cuando llora penitente, y en noviembre cuando pide y ruega por los viajeros de ultratumba. Se enluta noblemente, sin modos ni remilgos de reciente casquiviana viuda, que a poco de verse sin marido principia a cansarse de su temprana soledad. Allí el día de duelo todo es grave, serio e imponente. (Los parientes ricos, pp. 59, 60)

Many newspapers also recognized the importance of Catholicism and strove to instill its traditional values. Foremost among them was El Tiempo, the leading Catholic daily of the capital.

The Church and religion were only one of the themes common to novelists and journalists. They tended to examine society in more general terms, and were predominantly concerned with the material advancement of the nation and the conditions of its



political life. Economic progress in Mexico had been one of Porfirio Díaz's prime objectives, and under him the country had enjoyed a remarkable, if somewhat superficial, material development. Generally, writers evaluated this progress with relation to its effect on society and the need for social justice. Even before 1890, realist and naturalist novelists had undertaken a serious analysis of the misery and injustices suffered by the poor as a result of evident, economic disparities in Mexico. By contrast, journalists in 1890 still paid little attention to the common people and social problems. The newspapers for which they worked accepted the government's official version of peace and progress in the country, and did not seek to counter that claim. Moreover, newspapers were, on the whole, directed towards the upper levels of society, to the educated classes who subscribed to them, and reported the news according to the interest of this public. This situation began to change, however, towards the end of the XIXth century when new opposition newspapers began to attack the government openly and to condemn social and political injustice. El Demócrata was one such publication, and advanced its points of view systematically, both in the news columns of its daily editions and in its serialized novels, which between 1893 and 1896, included such socially committed works as Tomochic and Naufraigio by Heriberto Frías and Reproducciones by José Ferrel. Even the pro-government publications began to reflect similar concerns by the end of the decade; from 1898 the daily El Mundo persistently discussed important social issues, using its editorials to





attack the problems of crime, alcoholism, education and hygiene. In its editorial on January 14, 1904, El Imparcial, decrying the murder of a labourer by a landowner, condemned feudalism and reiterated the need for universal justice. Such attitudes in pro-government newspapers were not surprising if one remembers that they followed the criteria and conclusions offered by such outstanding 'porfirista' novelists as José López-Portillo y Rojas in La parcela (1898). In the first years of the XXth century, neither the journalists nor the novelists expressed any desire to bring about the changes and improvements through armed revolution. In keeping with the official government line of peace and prosperity, they envisaged a peaceful evolution to a state of social justice within the existing system and structures. However, by the final years of the 'Porfirista' regime the liberal and conservative points of view had become more antagonistic. In January of 1908, the financial weekly La Semana Mercantil began its editorial with an account of "El fracaso de la prosperidad pública". El Imparcial, the arch-conservative defender of the Díaz administration, refuted this article, maintaining that "Desde [1905 y 1906] la vida es más cara ciertamente; pero en cambio, TODOS DISFRUTAN DE MAYOR BIENESTAR, y nadie carece de medios de vivir, como pueda y quiera trabajar" (January 21, 1908, p. 1). The opinion advanced by El Imparcial represented the feeling of most conservative writers, novelists and journalists alike. Liberal writers, on the other hand, held a much more critical view on the state of social progress. The novelist Carlos Toro summarized their



attitude when he declared: "No apreciaba ningún adelanto en el progreso puramente material de la República, que se llena de ferrocarriles y de fábricas, destinados a transportar y enriquecer patanes extranjeros, en tanto que millones de compatriotas perecen entre los surcos de las haciendas o en las entrañas de las minas sin haber sabido tan siquiera que son seres humanos" (Vencedores y vencidos, 1910, pp. 68-69).<sup>11</sup>

Discussion of social progress and its material effects was closely linked to developments in the political arena. The principal novelists of the period, who, as we have seen, were positivists and members of the 'porfirista' oligarchy, concurred with the pro-government newspapers. They insisted on proclaiming the benefits of prosperity and progress that stemmed directly from the stability of a 'popular' and 'democratic' government. Opposition writers challenged this concept, and used both newspapers and novels as a means of attacking the conservatives. One of their constant criticisms was the effective lack of popular participation and democracy under Porfirio Díaz's rule. In Reproducciones (1895), José Ferrel derided the election of Guadalupe Cabanillas as governor of one of the Mexican states, when he had clearly been designated beforehand by the federal administration, and, although Porfirio Díaz is not directly mentioned, the intimation is that the President appointed him. Coincidentally, Cabanillas' son, who had been his father's secretary in the municipal government, was 'elected' as a deputy to the state legislature. Equivalent condemnations of the electoral process were repeated by other oppositionist





novelists, among them Porfirio Parra in Pacotillas (1900) and Manuel H. San Juan in El señor gobernador (1909).

The same criticisms appeared in contemporary, liberal newspapers. In an article on July 13, 1892, El Monitor Republicano ridiculed electoral procedures with the comment: "Hé aquí, según algunos periódicos amigos del Gobierno, el resultado de las 'elecciones' de Poderes Federales, que dicen que se efectuaron en esta República el domingo último...". On January 1st, 1895, José Ferrel initiated the second era of the opposition daily El Demócrata. His essential objectives were to attack the injustices and abuses of the federal government and to fight for freedom of the press, aims which he promoted in editorials and articles, as well as in the novels he chose to serialize daily. Ironically, within a month, Ferrel was in Belén Prison, and from there wrote his novel Reproducciones, which appeared by installments in his own newspaper. As the decisive year of 1910 drew nearer, the opposition press became even more critical of the political situation in Mexico. On July 15, 1909, the lead editorial of El Diario, "Absurdos de la política", concluded that "tras medio siglo de vida republicana, democrática, federal aun estamos muy lejos de ser república, de tener democracia y de llamarnos federación" (p. 2). The increasing, political criticism in the newspapers immediately prior to 1910 was a natural reflection of the growing discontent of the liberal faction. This was further intensified by the resurgence of nationalist feeling throughout Mexico, and was reflected in both politics and literature.



European movements had always served Mexican intellectuals as the basis for new artistic and literary movements, and had furnished writers with techniques and stylistic models to emulate. This was true even of the Modernist movement, which, in spite of having its best expression in the works of the Spanish American, Rubén Darío, intensified concentration on everything foreign, exotic or escapist in comparison with daily reality.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, a minority of Mexican writers had always maintained a strong sense of nationalism, extolled the merits of Mexican life and promoted the concept of a national literature. This current acquired significance under the aegis of Altamirano and El Renacimiento, and since then had become increasingly prevalent in literature, particularly under the influences and thematic concerns of the realist and naturalist movements. In journalism, a similar resurgence of nationalism was evident, especially in relation to the struggle in Cuba for independence from Spain (1895-1898). This revolution awoke sentiments of patriotism and nationalism throughout Spanish America, and these found their most direct expression in the pages of the newspapers, frequently in the editorial commentary. A typical example was El Diario del Hogar, which, in July of 1895, undertook to support the idea of Cuban independence and to criticize American influences and intervention which were then threatening to negate Cuba's efforts towards national self-assertion. The contributors to the literary pages and supplements of the newspapers also responded to the nationalist vogue. In 1895, La Patria Ilustrada published "Leyendas





históricas [mexicanas]" by Ireneo Paz; in 1898, El Imparcial offered "Leyendas nacionales", episodes from the history of the Aztec Empire; in 1900, El Diario del Hogar serialized "Sudamérica", accounts based on historical events in Spanish America; in 1902, the magazine El Mundo presented a series of articles describing various Mexican sites, buildings and points of interest, using drawings and photographs to give greater impact to the content.<sup>13</sup> Until 1906, the emphasis fell on picturesque, superficial patriotism; but, with the strike in Cananea, Mexico, and the libertarian revolt in Russia, the nation's sense of self-awareness assumed an openly political attitude of discontent. Pro-government newspapers, especially El Diario, El Imparcial and La Patria, praised the revolt in Russia as a great, social advance, but firmly dismissed the possibility of a similar occurrence in Mexico and reprehended those newspapers that intimated at such an eventuality. Even novelists of the liberal opposition did not seem to believe seriously in the likelihood of armed revolution. In El amor de las sirenas, Heriberto Frías, often mentioned as the principal precursor of the Novel of the Mexican Revolution, declared,

Somos de la clase media mexicana, ni buena ni mala, todavía; no podrida del todo, capaz de todo; que espera--y todo llega á tiempo al que sabe esperar-- nueva sangre y vida nueva, disciplina y carácter, escuelas, libros periódicos, gimnasios y jardines nuevos; capaz del cumplimiento del deber!... Creo en la redención por el dolor, el trabajo y el hogar; tengo fe en la Justicia! La vida no es mala;... (p. 477)



In 1909 and 1910 the volatile political situation increasingly monopolized the concerns of the whole country. However, few of the novels published at that time reflected the new political attitudes and national consciousness. Conservative newspapers generally endeavoured to ignore the social rumblings, so that it was left to the opposition press to give full vent to the pressing political disaffection of the country and to testify to the new resurgence of discontent. Many of these newspapers encapsulated their revolutionary fervour in their mottos: El Debate carried the caption "Ojo por ojo y diente por diente", El Diario del Hogar demanded "Sufragio efectivo / No re-elección", and México Nuevo appeared under the heading "Patria, Verdad y Justicia".<sup>14</sup> It was only at this time that talk of a possible armed revolution to oust the old regime became more generalized. Even so, scarcely any novelists seconded the urgency recorded by the opposition newspapers. One notable exception was Carlos Toro, the little known author of Vencedores y vencidos (written in 1910, but unpublished until 1916). The protagonist of this work, as the mouthpiece of the novelist, was moved at one point to condemn the fact that "un grupo enriquecido y poderoso había acabado por hacer preponderar la sociedad sobre el derecho, ajustando las acciones del poder a las necesidades generales de la nación. De aquí se originaba un desequilibrio peligroso que estaba preparando una futura revolución..." (p. 127).

After the first phase of the Revolution, the transfer of political power from Porfirio Díaz to Francisco I. Madero





brought about little change in the political and social structure of Mexico; the same political strongmen retained control of their regions; the same politicians served under the new President, and the former social order remained essentially intact. Traditionalist novelists were equally unaffected by the recent events, and maintained their established stylistic and thematic orientation. Only a few liberal novelists were impressed enough to attempt to depict the new situation and problems. Heriberto Frías was one, and on the title page of El triunfo de Sancho Panza (1911) he declared: "Me apresuro á publicar este libro porque lo juzgo de actualidad social y política.... Ciertó que los personajes que aquí pinto son, como la novela, hijos de mi libre fantasía; pero simbolizan los vicios sociales y políticos de muchos 'influyentes' 'de Provincia'." In contrast to the novelists, journalists followed the development of the Revolution with close attention, examining the new reality and voicing their disillusion at the lack of ideological achievements. Throughout 1911, for instance, La Patria published articles condemning the errors of the Revolution and lamenting the fact that Madero had not made significant changes to the regime. The pessimism and disenchantment expressed by the newspapers closely paralleled that of another opposition novelist, Mariano Azuela, who reflected a similar attitude in Andrés Pérez, maderista (1911).

If we compare the thematic content of the novels and newspapers between 1890 and 1912, it is evident that they had in common both a realistic description of national life and a



similar analysis of politics and society. As was natural, however, the similarity between journalism and the novel was not absolute. Although both coincided in their presentation of facts, the novelists generally viewed reality from a more distant and conceptual perspective, while journalists recorded current events and generally avoided abstract analysis. Furthermore, since the newspapers reflected the continuous spectrum of contemporary happenings, they often recorded news of transient interest that found no counterpart in the novels. This was perhaps most clearly shown in the increasing politicization of journalists from 1906 to 1910, a tendency seldom found in the novels of the same period. However, such dissimilarities coincided with the natural difference between the two genres. Whenever the novel and journalism shared a common, relevant reflection of society, they demonstrated an essential, thematic unity of purpose.

Given this relationship, it is appropriate to ask if the style of writing within the two genres also coincided. An evaluation of this problem is best undertaken by considering the two distinct periods, 1890-1900 and 1900-1912, on account of the innovations in journalism that radically changed its style.

Between 1890 and 1900, the prime objective of the major novelists was to compose works of artistic and literary merit. As we have indicated, the majority of these writers also contributed to newspapers, most frequently with literary compositions such as short stories, chronicles and poetry, although they often wrote informative articles as well. Such was





the case of writers of both prose and poetry, among whom figured such notables as Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, Angel de Campo, Luis G. Urbina, Justo Sierra, Manuel Flores, Amado Nervo and Carlos González Peña. Since these writers generally considered themselves men of letters, they paid close attention to their technique and style, even when writing for the newspaper. Consequently, journalism was characterized by a marked literary tone, particularly in editorials and special articles. Even the more professional journalists copied this style, writing from a subjective point of view and adopting literary techniques, such as the use of elegant language and rich vocabulary. Journalists also included a great many foreign words and expressions, taken from English, French, Italian and Latin, in order to display their own erudition and cultural enlightenment. Such phrases also permitted them to discuss socially delicate topics discreetly and euphemistically; *El Imparcial* always referred to the prostitutes of the capital as the "demimondaines". These elements of language added a distinctly literary tone to the newspapers, making journalism almost a form of communication between intellectuals instead of a popular mode of informative reporting. As late as 1906, one reporter of *La Patria*, commenting on a recent cultural affair, spoke of how "se tocó con amor una pieza", of how "los dramas históricos están demodés" and of the "buen gusto del savoir faire de los franceses" (July 8, 1906). Like the novelists, journalists also tended to expound their own principles and personal points of view whenever possible, regardless of how it affected their



articles. They addressed themselves directly to their public, reiterating phrases such as "nuestros reportazgos" and "nuestros lectores" to give a personal emphasis to their commentary and to indicate the essential points of the article to the reader. Such attitudes were natural, both among novelists and journalists, since almost all writers held partisan views with regard to political, social and religious problems and conflicts of the era, and felt they must express them in their writing.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, there was a fundamental difference between attitudes expressed in the novel and those evident in the newspaper: in the latter, the point of view was essentially political, based on verifiable, contemporary events, whereas, in the former, it was possible to convey the same ideas through the creative imagination of the novelist, expressed in a purely fictional form.

The writing style of novelists and journalists demonstrated the effects of all the '-isms' of the age. In both genres, precepts of realism were apparent in attempts to portray current concerns of Mexican life and politics, while the criteria of naturalism were applied to the study of misery, crime and suffering among the poor. The newspapers also demonstrated their naturalist tendencies through a propensity for recording the morbid or sensationalist details of crimes, accompanied by analyses of their social causes and consequences. Naturalism also affected the choice of serialized novels or reports, and editors chose works of social investigation according to the formulae expounded by Zola. Among the most





oustanding of these 'folletines' were Fisiología del crimen by Licenciado R. de Zayas Enríquez, published in El Siglo XIX, 1891-1892; El contagio del asesinato: estudio de antropología criminal by Dr. Paul Aubry de St. Brieuc in El Universal, 1900; and Condiciones físicas, morales e intelectuales del amor by Eugène Fournière in La Patria, 1900.

Romanticism affected both the novel and journalism, but was adulterated by the inclusion of the most mawkish elements of sentimentalism. In popular, entertaining novels, sentimentalism was not only common, but expected. Even socially committed writers, such as Heriberto Frías, incorporated it into their works as a matter of course, as is shown in Frías' description of the last meeting between the protagonist and his beloved Julia:

El joven, fulminado, detúvose, abriendo los ojos en la penumbra. Experimentó tal sacudimiento nervioso que los cabellos se le erizaron, conteniéndosele la respiración...y este pensamiento llenó solo su cerebro: ¡Julia! ¡Julia! Un gran frío en el cráneo, apretósele el corazón, le faltó aire... ¡Julia!... Sintió pavora, dolor, desesperación. ¡Encontraba a su Julia: viva, pero moribunda!... (Tomochic, p. 47)

The principal novelists of the era were equally susceptible to such influences: Federico Gamboa used it to full advantage in Santa in detailing the love between Santa and her blind protector, Hipólito; and Rafael Delgado was no less culpable in Angelina in his narration of the developments and complications in the idealized love between Angelina and Rodolfo.

Newspaper editors often encouraged sentimental or



emotional reporting because of its great appeal to the public, a gambit which, in turn, stimulated financial gains through the sale of the newspaper. This style was especially common in the obituary columns (where it seemed angels could not do enough when garnering the souls of the children of leading families), in the reports of catastrophes and poignant tragedies, and in sensationalist articles, particularly when a beautiful and tragic female was involved. In fact, such superficial emotionalism even pervaded the informative, news sections, as is evident in the account which was presented in *El Mundo* of a serious railway accident in Khodynsky (Russia). It began: "¡Oh, qué espantoso fué aquel espectáculo, y cómo sobrevivirá en la memoria de los que lo presenciaron!" (July 5, 1896, p. 6).<sup>16</sup>

The 'costumbrista' element most often took the form of accounts of national customs and descriptions of the Mexican landscape. In the newspapers 'costumbrismo' adopted a preeminently literary character since the leading publications solicited collaborations from authors such as Luis G. Urbina, Justo Sierra, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera and Angel de Campo. The weekly chronicles of these authors, consisting in narratives and descriptions of scenes and customs of national life, appeared as a regular part of the daily press.<sup>17</sup> The newspapers also published series of illustrated articles on specific national institutions, under titles such as "Iglesias nacionales" and "Edificios nacionales".

The presence of so many literary elements in the newspapers should not be taken as proof that all journalism





before 1900 was but a branch of literature. Through the news bulletins and the cablegrammes, it adhered closely to direct, informative reporting. The bulletins, or 'reportajes', summarized events of limited interest, briefly and succinctly reported so as to minimize the use of space; the cablegrammes were news items transmitted from abroad through the trans-Atlantic cable system, a costly process that imposed an exact, straight-forward style of reporting. However, longer news bulletins still tended sometimes toward a didactic, quasi-literary style, often as a result of the writer's training and his subjective treatment of the material. Angel de Campo affords us an excellent example of such tendencies in *La Rumba* (1890) when he debunks the personalized, sensationalist practice of news reporters:

Escandaloso es el incremento que toma el crimen, y apenas si hay día en que no tengamos que informar al público de uno nuevo. La sociedad va de mal en peor.

Cubrían las sombras de la noche el sucio callejón de las Mariposas; serían las once y media cuando el gendarme del punto, el número 537, oyó que pedían socorro y acudió a la casa número 20, llamada la Preciosa Sangre, y era de donde las voces salían. Los vecinos todos estaban en pie y dijeron haber oído un disparo y voces que pedían auxilio.

Llegaron otros gendarmes, que oyeron el silbato de alarma y subieron a la vivienda número 20, cuyo plan publicamos.....

--[Firmado por] Luis G. Rebolledo,  
repórter de crímenes

(*La Rumba*, pp. 275 and 276)

It must be stressed that, in an overall consideration of the newspaper in the decade between 1890 and 1900, the actual



news sections were not the main component of journalism. In fact, they were relegated to the last pages of the daily as summaries of minor events, and were not considered important. The main focus was directed towards editorials, commentaries and analytical articles. Since these were written mainly by literary contributors or by journalists with literary backgrounds, the predominant tone of journalism was dictated by their evaluative concept of creative prose composition. In light of this situation, the interaction between novel production and journalism can be seen as one in which literature affected the style and composition of the newspaper, since the latter had not yet developed into an organ of objective informative reporting effectively disengaged from literary influences.

In the years from 1900 to 1912, the changes initiated in journalism by Rafael Reyes Spíndola, tentatively in El Universal (1888) and definitively in El Imparcial (1896), began to alter the form and style of newspaper production. In accordance with the dominant emphasis on informative reporting, news items became the prime element in journalism, directly and impartially presented and unsigned to preserve the objective quality provided by anonymous composition. The additional length of the newspaper also resulted in an increase in the amount and variety of content, incorporating news items from the different regions of the country, sections on agriculture, sports, business and trade, columns relating social, cultural and legal happenings, and a page dedicated to women's interests, containing discussion of fashions, cooking and children. By contrast, the editorials





were restricted to a position of secondary importance. They appeared on one of the inside pages of the newspaper and were used to provide interpretation of current events.

The format of El Diario ("Periódico Independiente Nacional") in 1909 is a good example of the new developments. The first and part of the second page recounted the most important news of the day. The rest of the second was completed with one section of social notes and another of relevant editorial comment. International cablegrammes appeared on the third page. On the fourth there were items of special interest, such as religion, obituaries, or the theatre. The fifth page was dedicated to household hints and comments, and to the publication of a serialized novel. The sixth page contained news items of secondary importance, while the seventh and eighth listed announcements and classified advertisements. The literary section, previously of such integral importance in the daily, was now, with the exception of a serialized novel, confined to a Sunday supplement, composed of articles and comments of general interest, a page dealing with theatre news, another of literary contributions (usually short stories or poems), a page for children, a section on fashions and household hints for women, and additional items of an entertaining nature.

In contrast with the developments in journalism, the novels of this decade did not show any great stylistic differences from those of the preceding ten years. Novelists such as José López-Portillo y Rojas and Federico Gamboa continued to write according to trends already established,



while younger novelists, such as Mariano Azuela, borrowed heavily from earlier movements, in particular, from naturalism, realism and 'costumbrismo'. The novel and journalism displayed a close thematic relationship, especially with regard to social, political and patriotic concerns, but they differed with respect to principles of style. Whereas novelists were guided by creative aspirations and literary influences in the development of their material, journalists tended more and more to seek the perfection of succinct, informative news reporting in accordance with Reyes Spíndola's concepts of journalism. After 1901, when newspapers became unremittingly compromised in the growing political struggle between reactionary and revolutionary forces, such differences were even more noticeable. As a consequence, between 1900 and 1912 there was little interplay of stylistic similarities between the two genres.

In order to demonstrate the relationship between the novel and journalism, it is appropriate to consider the production of a writer who figured prominently in both areas. In this respect, the importance of Heriberto Frías is not derived solely from the role he played as a novelist and a newspaperman in the latter years of the 'Porfirista' era, but also on his renown as a precursor of the novel of the Revolution, based on the social preoccupations and 'journalistic' style attributed to his work.<sup>18</sup> Although his first attempts at literary composition date from 1889, when he began to publish poems in El Debate, his





first 'novel', Tomochic, did not appear until 1893, published between March 14th and April 14th in José Ferrel's liberal newspaper, El Demócrata. This novel was actually a synthesis of literature and journalism. The former found its best expression in the typically Romantic love story of Miguel and Julia, in the poetic tone with which Frías described Nature, and in his artistic idealization of the rebels. A fine example of his literary skill is found in the contrast developed between the morbid thoughts of the protagonist on the death of his friend and the vibrant, poetic description of the sunrise over the mountains:

¡Pobre capitán...! ¡Pobre valiente...!  
Y en esta vulgar frase resumían todos su dolor y su piedad.

Eran las siete, y tras el Cerro de Lino, al oriente, emergió el sol su disco rojo y enorme con una explosión de finísima luz dorada que encendió la cima de los cerros, aclaró la lila del cielo, barrió jirones de neblina e hizo centellar el acero de los cañones de los fusiles.

Los oficiales volvieron los rostros, colocando sobre los ojos una mano a manera de pantalla para contemplar el astro agigantado, en tanto que tras de ellos, su luz les hacía proyectar larguísimas sombras.

--¡El sol de Tomochic...! ¡Pobre capitán!-- exclamó Miguel dirigiéndose a sus camaradas. No le entendieron, y continuó en silencio su épica oración fúnebre.

Algunos soldados se pusieron a cantar animados con la alegría de la luz y la esperanza del calor...el sol ascendía, el sol de Tomochic...

¡Pobre capitán! (p. 104)

The literary aspect of Tomochic may be attributed, in part, to the fact that, since it was published serially as entertainment for subscribers, it had to have an artistic form and style suitable for that context. However, J. W. Brown also noted other



literary attributes of the novel.<sup>19</sup> In his opinion, Tomochic was strongly influenced by French naturalism and belonged to the category of "novelas de guerra" which flourished in the second half of the XIXth century and which included such works as War and Peace, The Red Badge of Courage, Os sertiões and La débâcle. Moreover, Brown noted a close relationship between Frías' novel and Zola's La débâcle: there are close parallels between important scenes; both novelists criticized "graves deficiencias de sus respectivos ejércitos nacionales que carecen de métodos y equipos modernos, de entretenamiento práctico, y ante todo, el liderazgo eficaz" (p. xvii); and, the central characters of both works were intended to personify the virtues and weaknesses of national armies.

Journalistic elements also played a substantial part in the creation of Tomochic, and were especially evident in the simple recounting of actual events, in the use of the preterit tense for past narration, and in the attention paid to historical realism when relating the causes of the uprising and the subsequent, military response. An exceptional example of this style is offered in the account of the attack on the church at Tomochic:

Ocupadas las casas, listos los "Nacionales" en el alto crestón del Cerro de la Cueva para batir la torre, a las once de la mañana la corneta de órdenes del general tocó fuego. Tronó el cañón. Simultáneas descargas cubrieron de humo los frentes de las casuchas y la cima de la Cueva, de donde empezó a descender una lluvia de haces de rastrojo encendido, de humeantes rollos de zacate, de sacos de paja, de densos nubarrones salpicados de chispas.

De vez en cuando, cual granadas de mano, eran





lanzados desde el Cerro de la Cueva al recinto de la iglesia, los botes de petróleo.

Al propio tiempo todas las cornetas que tuvo a mano el general, y que se encontraban en otras casas en torno del templo, tocaron ataque, como si por todas partes fuesen a arrancar columnas de asalto contra aquella pobre y destartelada iglesia, acosada, triste reducto de un montón de fieros moribundos.... (p. 114)

In John Brushwood's opinion Tomochic was essentially reportage and not a novel:

Al decidirse a escribir Tomochic, es muy probable que haya querido escribir un reportaje más bien que una novela. Por lo general, se sirvió de una técnica narrativa muy sencilla. Los elementos que no se relacionaron directamente con la campaña, por ejemplo los amores del joven oficial, tienen un tono literario falso y no se ajustan bien al estilo predominante del libro. Parecería que tales elementos fueran brotes de la conciencia literaria del novelista, el cual empleó inconscientemente una expresión natural al referirse a la campaña misma.<sup>20</sup>

Although we do not deny Brushwood's conjecture, we feel it is more likely that the journalistic elements were products of the moment and the special circumstances under which Frías wrote the work. His initial objective was doubtless to provide a true account of the military events, but it is equally true that Frías himself moderated the journalistic tone in the four subsequent editions (1894, 1899, 1906, 1911) through the addition of new paragraphs and even of complete chapters (VI, XVI, XXX, XXXI, XXXVIII, and the second half of XV and XL). Although the original journalistic style has not been greatly altered, it has been tempered by other components, most notably the incorporation of further literary elements,<sup>21</sup> a more thoroughly developed justification of the rebels' cause, and an



increasingly strong denunciation of Porfirio Díaz, the federal government and the army.

The literary aspects of Tomochic must also be seen in another light. In 1911, the year of the definitive edition of his first novel, Heriberto Frías also published its sequel, El triunfo de Sancho Panza. Although it portrays the same protagonist, Frías' alter ego, and the same themes of social concern, namely criticism of the government and condemnations of the suffering and misery of the masses, the thematic focus has changed radically. It is no longer a simple, historical narrative, but rather an evaluation of the current social and political situation, symbolized by the opposition of the forces of idealism and social improvement (Don Quijote) to those of materialism and self-interest (Sancho Panza). In one chapter, Frías retraces the actions and sufferings of Miguel Mercado in Tomochic, but, in accordance with the new perspective, conceives them in relation to the criteria of conflict between the Quixotic actions of Miguel and the triumph of the vested interests of reactionary forces. The passage alluding to the tragic deaths of soldiers resulting from government ineptitude and insufficient preparation was typical of the new social focus:

Los oficiales, bisonños y heroicos, habían cumplido firmes en la espesura, en la nube roja y blanca del combate, de un combate al que no estaban preparados y al que se les empujaba sin marcarles rumbo, sin señalar objetivo, sin desplegar bandera alguna. ....

Recordó la muerte heroica de un capitán.  
--He aquí quién sabe dónde, el cadáver de un hombre que pudo haber sido útil, un noble hijo





del Colegio Militar, que habría llegado á ser un digno jefe de la nueva generaci3n militar mexicana. ....

Y entonces se di3 cuenta del hecho fatídico en que casi siempre los verdaderos héroes son los muertos, las víctimas anónimas del Deber....  
(pp. 98, 100)

The most important aspect of El triunfo de Sancho Panza is its literary synthesis of ideas and themes. Contrary to Tomochic, Heriberto Frías did not have to have recourse to a direct, quasi-journalistic style to communicate his concerns; consequently, it would be incorrect to say that the journalistic style was the only one he knew or could use. Like most novelists of his period, he was aware of the usefulness of journalism, but could surpass it and create literature.

Frías' criticism stemmed from his position as a leading member of the liberal opposition. Hence, it is not surprising that his themes parallel the social concerns and commentaries of the partisan press of his day. However, his political convictions never equalled the revolutionary ferment of the opposition newspapers. For Frías, as for other novelists, social and political changes could come about through peaceful evolution; he maintained a positivist hope of overcoming misery and inequality through "una redenci3n posible, al trabajo y al hogar" (El amor de las sirenas, 1908, p. 1). Accepting Frías as a representative writer of the correspondence between journalism and the novel, we would have to admit that he, perhaps more than most novelists, was strongly influenced by newspaper style. However, literary ability was not necessarily constrained by a vocation to journalism. As was the case with most novelists,



Erías expressed social and political concerns, but developed them within a literary framework and thereby gave full scope to the creative and conceptual potential of his ideas.

Style and theme were not the only points of contact between the novel and journalism. Between 1890 and 1912, novelists evinced a thorough knowledge of the nature of the newspaper, both as an informative and political vehicle, and as a literary device for plot development.

Journalism was most frequently incorporated into a novel by means of the inclusion of "extracts" from a newspaper in order to advance the plot or to highlight specific aspects of its theme. In El donador de almas (1899), Amado Nervo interspersed fictitious quotations from Mexican and European newspapers as a means of summarizing the growing fame of Dr. Rafael Artiga and of abbreviating the passage of some four years into four pages of prose. In La Rumba (1891), Angel de Campo extensively mimicked the informative press in order to relate details of the protagonist's crime of passion and to examine the subsequent, social reactions. He also elaborated this technique in order to criticize the customs of sensationalist news mongering and to satirize journalists who ignored the principles of their trade and shirked their moral and social duty to society.<sup>22</sup>

Angel de Campo was hardly unique in his attitude toward the press, since many novelists attacked the shortcomings and





abuses of contemporary journalism. Manuel San Juan's criticism in El señor gobernador was directed against all newspapers that failed to meet their obligation to inform society: he criticized the pro-government press because it undermined its own impartiality by accepting subsidies from vested interests who wished to buy its loyalty and support; he censured opposition newspapers for their irresponsibility in indiscriminately attacking everyone and everything, except those who bought their silence by becoming subscribers. In spite of the fact that San Juan himself was an opposition liberal, he was not blind to the faults and excesses of opposition journalists, as he demonstrated in the chapter, "De los opositoristas y de cómo nacen, crecen y se reproducen estos elementos en toda república liberal y democrática". In his opinion, the majority of oppositionists were as much at fault as the conservative newspapers, for, whereas the latter abrogated their professional responsibilities in favour of financial gain and self-advancement, the former were predisposed, through blind envy, to attacking established authority as a means of obtaining personal revenge. Emilio Rabasa (El cuarto poder, Moneda falsa) and Porfirio Parras (Pacotillas) also censured newspapers that operated for purely economic or partisan ends, and they satirized the practices of journalists who sacrificed the principle of informative impartiality to pretentious self-interest, by drawing attention to themselves in strident rhetoric or platitudinously controversial articles.



As a further aspect of their criticism, novelists also analysed the partiality of the contemporary press and the manner in which it displayed its attitudes. Many writers, among them Manuel San Juan, saw journalism as having essentially a dual character: the pro-government faction, and the liberal opposition. Others, however, including Emilio Rabasa and Porfirio Parra, correctly perceived a third facet, composed of politically neutral newspapers which represented the core of worthwhile journalism. Parra carefully elaborated the essence of each component, developing his concepts within the framework of his novel Pacotillas. His protagonist<sup>23</sup> is an aspiring and idealistic journalist whose close affiliation with the world of the newspaper permits him to act as the novelist's mouthpiece. In his first appointment, Pacotillas is employed by the reactionary editor of La Bandera del Progreso, a newspaper without redeeming qualities, staunchly and blindly committed to conservative policies. The daily fails to meet any of the prerequisites of sound journalism: its columns are filled with lies, rumours and sensationalist exaggeration, its editorial columns consist of gratuitous and scurrilous attacks against anyone opposed to its ideas and the administration it champions, and, as a result of its acceptance of a government subsidy, its political objectivity is sacrificed to financial expediency. Disillusioned by the newspaper's prostitution of its obligations, Pacotillas refuses to contribute to its unprincipled political stance and is fired. He is then approached by the director of an opposition newspaper, but once





again he will not renounce his ideals when faced with the prospect of working in a disreputable publication directed towards blind opposition and characterized by malicious gossipmongering. After much personal suffering, in which the protagonist agonizes over the merit of his journalistic ideals, he is offered a suitable position with El Independiente, a newspaper controlled by an honest, competent liberal, whose daily epitomizes the guiding concepts of creditable journalism: "Mi periódico es liberal, hace una oposición razonada y sensata, moderada en el lenguaje, que respeta á las personas y sólo ataca á los abusos" (Pacotillas, p. 411). Pacotillas' ultimate death as the victim of his own utopian precepts provided Parra with one last opportunity to criticize feckless newspapers and to express his hope for a truly worthy and respectable journalism.

Other novelists, in particular those of secondary importance, who were generally associated with the liberal opposition, also rose to the defense of dedicated journalists. In Reproducciones, José Ferrel showed his sympathy for the editor of La Voz del Pueblo who, for speaking out truthfully against the corruption and nepotism of provincial officials, was unjustly and illegally jailed by the government on the trivial charge that, "por eso quieren la libertad esos pillos, para meterse en lo que no les importa" (Reproducciones, p. 59). However, when the local prefect became governor of his state, and in turn founded his own 'official' daily, ironically called El Eco del Estado, to promote a machination of lies and unwarranted attacks against all opposition, Ferrel was



unremitting in his satire. In El triunfo de Sancho Panza, Heriberto Frías gave full credit to the dedicated director of El Faro, the opposition newspaper that lead a Quixotic struggle against injustices and political abuses. Ironically, because he had published "artículos contra el servilismo de esta época, contra la actual tiranía, contra estos caciques, contra el Gobierno" (p. 61) the editor had to flee, treacherously defeated by the triumphant forces of tyranny. In La camada, Salvador Quevedo y Zubieta also paid attention to the unjust predicament suffered by worthwhile newspapers which, although they epitomized the essence of conscientious, honest journalism were destined "a morir en breve por su veracidad tremenda" (p. 442).

Quevedo y Zubieta's work is also interesting for the excellent example it provides of another, recurrent aspect of the relationship between the novel and journalism. Like many writers of the period, Quevedo y Zubieta interpolated extracts of factual reportage from contemporary newspapers into his novel as a means of developing the plot. However, in La camada this was done in a creative manner. The work was written as a novelized account of historically verifiable events of 1897 dealing with the intrigues of the then Inspector of Police, Eduardo Velázquez, who sought to obtain political favour for himself by fabricating, 'discovering', and then suppressing an attempted assassination of Porfirio Díaz. Unfortunately for the Inspector, the exposure of his plot led to sensationalist reports of the scheme in the newspapers throughout the month of September, 1897. Quevedo y Zubieta made full use of these





reports. He developed his own narrative, in accordance with the facts of the intrigue, and also included minor details such as the lynching of the 'accused assassin' and the eventual suicide of Velázquez with its further tangential ramifications.

Interwoven throughout is a subplot centred on the amorous entanglements of two secondary characters and their involvement in the main plot. In some cases, the novelist based his text closely on contemporary reports (see Appendix C),<sup>24</sup> particularly those of El Imparcial. However, Quevedo y Zubieta's style is not 'journalistic'. He subordinated the newspaper reports to the necessities of his theme and objectives. Consequently, the novelist's creative imagination and his more refined, literary style serve to incorporate the historical and journalistic elements as an integral part of the novel. Yet, at the same time, his inclusion of the reports allowed him to indulge in a certain social and political criticism and to satirize contemporary newspaper reporting. The report on the 'lynchamiento' (not the 'linchamiento') of the accused assassin provided Quevedo y Zubieta with the opportunity to condemn social appearances and to criticize the insidiousness of North American influence: "Aquella 'y' griega no era 'i' vocal; sin embargo valía como si lo fuese.... Así la vida, así toda la farsa social..." (p. 514). In the final analysis, La camada does not appear as a novelized rendering of newspaper accounts, but can be appreciated on its own merit without considering the journalistic sources that inspire it. To this extent, Quevedo y Zubieta typified an accepted trend in the novel. He demonstrated



an awareness of journalism and its role, but adapted the elements he took from it to suit the artistic process of his own creation.

Salvador Quevedo y Zubieta was representative of the majority of the novelists of the period between 1890 and 1912 in other ways as well. Nearly every one of them maintained some sort of direct or indirect affiliation with journalism, either as editors, reporters or directors in the day to day operation of the press, or as contributors to the literary and editorial sections of the newspapers and magazines. This familiarity with the role and nature of journalism permitted the novelists to make appropriate criticisms of its shortcomings, and frequently, to exploit it as source material for their own compositions. Naturally enough, there was also a close thematic correspondence in the content of newspapers and the novels, especially with respect to the pressing social and political concerns. However, there was still a fundamental distinction between the two. While journalists were directly confined to the portrayal of historical reality, novelists enjoyed the free use of their creative imagination. The relationship with respect to style was even less consistent. Certainly, between 1890 and 1900, the two genres shared a similar mode of writing, but this was due principally to the fact that the news items and the editorials were composed by educated writers of literature who gave journalism its evaluative character as a consequence of their own artistic vocation. After 1896, when, among the other attributes of modern journalism, Reyes Spíndola irrevocably





established an impartial, informative style of reporting, a definitive separation was initiated. While journalists conformed to the new requirements, novelists continued to produce in accordance with the earlier canons of aesthetic and artistic composition. In brief, a certain relationship and an interchange between the two genres prevailed between 1890 and 1912, but were inconsistent and varied quite markedly.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Adalbert Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Rafael Delgado, Angelina, edition and prologue by Antonio Castro Leal (México: Ed. Porrúa, 1947), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ernest Moore, "The Novel of the Mexican Revolution", Mexican Life, No 7, Vol. XVI (July, 1949), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>According to José Luis Martínez, the focus of these novelists developed naturally from the earlier 'costumbrista' movement: "La observación y la pintura del ambiente mexicano, que continúan dominando el repertorio temático de nuestros novelistas, progresan hacia el nacionalismo cada vez más consciente y significativo" (La expresión nacional: Letras mexicanas del siglo XIX, México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1955, p. 61).

<sup>5</sup>J. L. Martínez, Problemas literarios (México: Obregón, 1955), p. 155.

<sup>6</sup>Mariano Azuela is also considered a member of this group by virtue of his first novels (María Luisa, 1907; Los fracasados, 1908; Mala verba, 1909; Sin amor, 1912), works which depict the same concerns and characteristics evinced by the other opposition novelists of the pre-Revolutionary period.

<sup>7</sup>From time to time some newspapers increased the number of pages but the prohibitive costs and the lack of sufficient material made the attempt impossible. Rafael and Oscar Reyes Spíndola had printed the first editions of El Universal (in July, 1888) with 8 pages, but shortly afterwards reduced them to four.

<sup>8</sup>It is important to distinguish between the 'novela por entregas' and the 'novela de folletín'. The former was written especially for the newspaper, and adapted accordingly: it was long, with a great many digressions; it generally lacked stylistic polish; and every chapter finished on a point of suspense. The 'novela por entregas' was a work already published, from which the newspaper extracted either a chapter or a set number of pages every day. Frequently, it published eight pages, intending that the reader should collect the daily sections of the novel (whose eight pages formed an octavo), to be submitted later to the newspaper which would then bind them into a book as a special service to subscribers. Mexican journalists usually preferred to publish the 'novela por entregas', although in reality the two terms were used interchangeably in newspapers to designate any serialized novel published at regular intervals.





<sup>9</sup>Emil Dovifat, El periodismo (México: UTEHA, 1959), Vol. II, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup>Rafael Delgado published La Calandria in the Revista Nacional de Letras y Ciencias, Angelina in El Tiempo, a Catholic daily, and Los parientes ricos in the Semanario Literario Ilustrado; Angel de Campo introduced La Rumba in the magazine, El Nacional.

<sup>11</sup>In our text we shall identify quotations from novels by the author, title of the work and pagination. See concluding bibliography for editions consulted.

<sup>12</sup>In many ways Modernism greatly exaggerated preoccupation in Mexico with the cultural and social superiority of Europe. The national newspapers dedicated a surprising number of columns to the activities of the royal and noble families of Europe and to the gossip concerning them, as well as to all the events of the 'civilized' life on the continent. These news items did not appear so much to inform generally as to meet the desire of subscribers for real-life fairy tales of princes and princesses and to offer a superficial insight into the brilliant social and cultural life of the Old World.

<sup>13</sup>Newspapers and magazines prolonged this tendency, even until 1910. In 1899 the review El Mundo had included a great many poems and short stories on Mexican themes and events; in 1907 the same magazine offered a series of graphic articles under the title "Nuestro ejército"; in the same year, El Diario published its "Reminiscencias históricas", while in 1910 it serialized articles on "Edificios históricos".

<sup>14</sup>The political attitudes expressed by the newspapers were by no means immutable. In its editorial of July 6, 1910, La Patria declared: "Nosotros con toda buena fe, con toda sinceridad, con todo cariño y con toda la firmeza que sabemos emplear en las causas que defendemos, desde que se inició la presente cuestión electoral, nos declaramos partidarios de la fórmula Díaz Corral para los supremos poderes de la República" (p. 1). But, on July 1st, 1911, its attitude had shifted with the political tide to an anti-Porfirista and pro-democratic position: "En los buenos tiempos de la dictadura porfiriana las aptitudes personales sonaban así como un cuento de brujas en una reunión de incrédulos. La corrupción era general..." (p. 1). In the same vein the editorialist condemned the "dictadura del porfiriato" and exalted the "pueblo 'oprimido'."

<sup>15</sup>According to José Luis Martínez, "Sus escritos, fuesen o no ideológicos, se adscribían naturalmente al campo de un partido y difícilmente puede encontrarse el caso de un escritor que no haya sido, activa o pasivamente, adicto a alguno de los bandos, cuyo medio de expresión era siempre los periódicos" (La expresión nacional: Letras mexicanas del siglo XIX, p. 80).





<sup>16</sup>Another typical example of this style appeared in El Imparcial on June 11, 1897, in a report of the suicide of a young woman:

...el infeliz...padre se lanzó fuera de la recámara y ¡cruel realidad! vió, tendida sobre el suelo, cubierto el rostro de sangre y contraído, á su infortunada hija, ya exánime.

Tomóle el pulso, la llamó repetidas veces, quiso abrirle los ojos, y cuando se hubo convencido de que la joven estaba bien muerta, se arrodilló junto al cadáver y comenzaron sus ojos á derramar abundantes lágrimas.

En esta situación encontraron al afligido padre varios vecinos que acudieron al escuchar el disparo.

Aquella escena trágica conmovió á los circunstantes.

¡Dios mío! ¡Dios mío!, exclamaba el anciano pintor, levantando las manos en ademán de angustia. --¡Salva á mi hija! devuévemela, es el consuelo de mi vejez.

.....

Concepción Clavel...tenía 18 primaveras; era de afable trato, de irreprochable conducta, el encanto de su hogar, el ídolo de su padre y hermanos.

¡Pobre muchacha! Era la primera vez que sentía palpar su corazón á impulsos de un amor, así es que para ella el primer desengaño fué un golpe mortal....(p. 1)

<sup>17</sup>Many of these contributions still lie forgotten in different newspapers. Angel de Campo is a case in point. His "Semanas alegres", published in El Imparcial from January 21, 1900 until January 26, 1908, still have not been collected and published in a single volume. On the other hand, other important works (Ocios y apuntes, 1890; Cosas vistas, 1894; Cartones, 1897) are the result of his newspaper articles, published primarily in El Nacional. Ocios y apuntes, for example, is the anthology of the articles printed in El Nacional on Thursdays and Sundays in 1890 under the title of "Ocios".

<sup>18</sup>See the comments of René Avilés, "Heriberto Frías y la moderna novela mexicana", Suma bibliográfica, Vol. IV, Nos 11-12 (March-April, 1948), pp. 318-320; Ralph E. Warner, Historia de la novela mexicana en el siglo XIX (México: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1953), p. 113; Adalbert Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973), p. 13; Beryl McManus, "La técnica del nuevo realismo en la novela mexicana de la Revolución", Memoria del Cuarto Congreso del Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana (Habana: 1949), pp. 315-317; Mauricio Magdaleno, "Alrededor de





la novela moderna mexicana", El Libro y el Pueblo, Vol. IV, No 4 (Sept.-Oct., 1941), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>James W. Brown, "Prólogo y notas" to Heriberto Frías, Tomochic (México: Porrúa, 1968). In his prologue, Brown details the steps in the creation and the evolution of this work, and discusses its literary merits. His comments preface the definitive edition of 1911, but Brown indicates where Frías has added paragraphs and even chapters and also notes other changes made to the original edition of 1893.

<sup>20</sup>John S. Brushwood, "La novela mexicana frente al porfirismo", Historia Mexicana, Tomo VII (July 1957-June 1958), pp. 388-389.

<sup>21</sup>For example, Chapter XXI, "Los perros de Tomochic", initially published as a short story in La Revista Moderna in 1900, was not inserted into the novel until 1906.

<sup>22</sup>We have already quoted an example of this satire in the crime report from El Noticioso; using this as a basis, Angel de Campo criticized sensationalist journalism, which, through salacious news items, tried to bring greater attention upon itself and to increase sales. Campo also mocked the pseudo-moralizing tone of the reporter, and his habit of signing his name to the article in an attempt to earn personal glory and to establish his own reputation.

<sup>23</sup>The name of the protagonist, "Pacotillas", is not intended to signify any subtle criticism, nor does it refer to the character of the hero. Rather, it is a nickname given him as a student by his friends: his own name, Francisco Téllez, was shortened to Paco Téllez and then to Pacotillas.

<sup>24</sup>Appendix C contains the 'news reports' Quevedo y Zubieta introduced into his text. However, we also quote those of El Imparcial, which evidently served as his model, and those of La Patria in order to give a second perspective on the same subject. These reports are also noteworthy examples of the newspaper style of the era.



#### IV

##### 1910-1940: The Novel of the Revolution

As an armed movement, the Mexican Revolution lasted from 1910 until 1920, but its influence extended far beyond that decade, affecting all aspects of the national conscience and initiating a period of transformation, the consequences of which are still evident in Mexico today. It was natural that this influence should also be felt in literature and that writers, as they sought to analyse the Revolution and its consequences, should endeavour to discard the old in the search for forms of expression appropriate to the new situation and intended to depict it adequately. The most immediate literary product was the novel of the Revolution.

Literary critics have analyzed the new forms and the way in which they portrayed Mexican life as a basis for defining the novel of the Revolution, and for obtaining a valid and effective assessment of the literature to which the Revolution gave rise. The diversity of content and style, however, has so complicated the concept of the novel of the Revolution that it has proven difficult to reach a generally accepted conclusion with respect to a definition of the genre and a conclusive evaluation of its merit. It was first necessary to establish the criteria whereby





a prose narrative might be termed a novel of the Revolution. F. R. Morton was representative of a critical consensus when, even for works which did not appear to conform to the established definition of the novel, he stated that content was the essential consideration:

...dígase pues, que la Novela de la Revolución es la manifestación exterior, manifestación a veces plástica, a veces espiritual, de la Revolución que se obró en el corazón de México. Asimismo, no requiere la Novela de la Revolución ni argumento, ni estilo, ni aun protagonistas bien definidos. No requiere tampoco la mecánica literaria que es la novela. La Novela de la Revolución requiere una sola cosa: la experiencia, sea ésta vivida, recordada o pensada. La experiencia, eso es, de una época durante la cual se transformó la manera de pensar de una nación. Si la Novela de la Revolución puede recrear o expresar, no importa su grado de perfección, una parte de esta transformación, cumple con su misión y cumple con el requisito de ser Novela de la Revolución. Más que el tema o estilo, argumento o personajes, es el 'fondo' lo que importa.<sup>1</sup>

The critics also sought to devise methods for analysing the many different narrative forms (autobiographies, testimonials, memoirs, sociological documents, history, literary and didactic narratives) and, at the same time, to give a clear order to the novel of the Revolution as a whole. Some, like Adalbert Dessau in La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, chose completely personal or arbitrary criteria. In Dessau's case it was socialist ideology. He divided the literature of the Revolution into three periods: the gradual union of literature with the revolutionary movement of the masses (1920-1928); the involvement of literature in the class struggle and the



consequent development of a revolutionary literature (1928-1938); and the aesthetic and social neutralization of the literature of the Revolution (1938-1947). F. Rand Morton, on the other hand, in his study Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, preferred a chronological scheme based on thematic considerations:

- i) The novel of the Revolution proper, in which the period of armed conflict is portrayed using the Revolution both as background and as plot (e.g. Los de abajo).
- ii) The novel of revolutionary ideas, in which political aspects of the Revolution tend to be analysed (e.g. La sombra del caudillo).
- iii) The novel of social content, containing analysis or simply description of the effects of the Revolution on the social life of the country.
- iv) The 'indigenista' novel, in part a result of the novel of social content, which advocates Indian rights and focuses on problems among the indigenous population.
- v) The novel of the Revolution remembered, distinguished by its historical accuracy and use of the Revolution as an artistic or psychological theme rather than as a source of plot (e.g. Al filo del agua).

Others, among them Antonio Castro Leal, sought a more simplified approach to the problem, and divided the novelists of the Revolution into two generations. In the first they included writers who had witnessed the Revolution or actually taken part in it, and who narrated their experiences in an episodic form appropriate to the need of depicting the events of the period.<sup>2</sup> The novelists of the second generation were, naturally, younger writers who dealt with revolutionary themes in a more artistic





or literary form, using the description of the conflict as a pretext for expounding their concerns for the masses, criticizing post-revolutionary society, or writing an entertaining story. In reality, however, there is no clear distinction between the two generations, due largely to the multiplicity of form, style and content and to the chronological overlap between the two generations. Even Castro Leal never sought to establish more than general guidelines within which to develop his analysis.

Notwithstanding differences in the points of view referred to, there are two elements common to the majority of novels of the Revolution which figure significantly in most discussions of the genre. These are the description of reality, and the exploitation of new and appropriate narrative methods with which to analyse post-Revolutionary society. Both aspects are fundamental to the movement and must be seen as complementary facets, enabling the novelists of the Revolution to come to terms with changing circumstances in Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Both novelty of form and a focus on reality were apparent in the novel of the Revolution from its initial stages, and developed in response to the need to record and re-create the realities of revolutionary upheaval. Thus, in the opinion of Adalbert Dessau, the novel evolved under the duress of political and social conditions:

La novelística de la Revolución Mexicana fue de gran importancia para el desarrollo de la novela criolla. Se la consideró como modelo de la descripción de los problemas nacionales. Sin



embargo, ocupa también una posición especial, ya que en ningún otro país existió la posibilidad y la necesidad de reproducir en el arte la revolución demoburguesa como proceso terminado, y los problemas de su prosecución. Precisamente, esta situación especial determinó que en México fuese más brusco el rompimiento con la tradición anterior.<sup>4</sup>

Jean Franco also sought an explanation for the development of the novel in the changes that had occurred in society:

...una nueva clase surgió, una clase que no era siempre escrupulosa ni idealista, pero que estaba dedicada a los ideales de la Revolución. Entre ellas se contaban artistas y escritores que, ahora que ya no existía una élite aristocrática, tenían que dirigirse a un público nuevo, un público sediente de educación pero cuyas ideas eran aún primitivas y sencillas.... Los escritores se mostraron lentos en adaptarse a la nueva época, pero hasta ellos empezaron gradualmente a digerir y a elaborar el material nuevo que ofrecía la Revolución.<sup>5</sup>

Both Dessau and Franco held the view that the new forms and innovative methods of examining reality were products of the Revolution itself since there were, they believed, no literary or intellectual precedents in Mexican literature. Everardo García Erosa was even more categorical on this topic:

Poco o nada puede estimarse en la novelística la obra literaria anterior a la revolución, afrancesada, carente de nuestra verdad, y que no comprendió el mandato histórico de preparar el terreno a la gesta de 1910.... La literatura preparó el camino de muchas revoluciones. El escritor ha sido siempre el que primero siente e interpreta las inquietudes de la humanidad; pero en México no se siguió esta conducta, y, hecha ya la revolución, después de asentado el río en su nuevo cauce, comenzó a surgir una literatura producto del movimiento liberador.<sup>6</sup>

To a degree, it is correct to claim that the literature of





the 'Porfirista' era did not foretoken the new style that evolved with the Revolution. Even the opposition writers under Porfirio Díaz did not foresee a Revolution, but expressed the hope for a gradual political and social evolution that would result in an improved national situation. Nevertheless, one can find in the works of the opposition novelists the origins of a prose narrative focused on the questions of social inequality and injustice and on the re-evaluation of Mexico's national identity and cultural heritage. Novelists such as Manuel H. San Juan and Heriberto Frías merit the distinction as precursors of the novelists of the Revolution, particularly in their use of an episodic style and a direct, unadorned prose employed to reflect the political and social reality around them. Thus, in spite of the view of Adalbert Dessau that "ni en la literatura mexicana ni en la extranjera se encuentran precursores de semejante empresa.... Debió desarrollarse una literatura absolutamente nueva" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 410), it must be acknowledged that the novel of the Mexican Revolution is not a completely original development, either on the national or the international scene. Indeed, Antonio Castro Leal, drawing analogies between Mexican literature and international tendencies, pointed out that similar, new forms are introduced whenever a writer faces the need to record new realities:

Que la realidad ha impuesto esta técnica parece demostrarlo la existencia de novelas semejantes, escritas en otros países cuya vida ha estado sujeta a cambios violentos y a repentinos trastornos sociales. El ejemplo típico sería Caballería roja, del escritor ruso Isaac Babel, que recoge, en cuadros de gran intensidad



dramática y de punzante humorismo, sus experiencias durante la campaña polaca de 1920. (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 28)

Fernando Alegria viewed the introduction of such new forms as a generalized phenomenon in prose composition characteristic of periods of critical social and political change:

Hay que añadir lo siguiente; a los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, como a los de la Revolución Rusa o de la Guerra Civil española (¿y no aconteció lo mismo a los cronistas de la Conquista?) la urgencia de testificar les impuso una técnica que se aplica hoy a la novela--el reportaje, es decir y siguiendo la terminología cinematográfica, usaron la forma del 'documental de largo metraje'. Su realidad, no por ser episódica, deja de ser parcial, personalista, novelesca. Lo interesante de anotar es que los planteamientos directos de Gallegos, y los de Azuela, tuvieron una eficacia tanto literaria como social precisamente por su índole demostrativa.<sup>7</sup>

By "índole demostrativa" Alegria wished to indicate a style characterized as "directo, descriptivo, formulativo, pictórico" (Literatura y revolución, p. 17). This style was an essential aspect of the new forms, developed to reflect the nature of the Revolution and to record and analyse the essence of the national dilemma, the suffering of the masses, and the social problems of Mexico, during and after the fighting. Although the novelists tempered absolute documentation of reality with creative elements designed to enhance the novelistic form of their work, they tended to record what they had experienced, witnessed, or remembered, often combining their sense of realism with elements of 'costumbrismo'. Since the recounting of events was more important than aesthetic considerations the narration was





characteristically succinct, chronological and relatively impersonal:

En la novela de la Revolución Mexicana--como en todas las novelas inspiradas en realidades semejantes--el desarrollo es más bien lineal, los sucesos se acomodaron unos tras otros y de toda la realidad que se viven en el fluir del tiempo, sólo se escogen los sucesos más impresionantes. Más que a una cinta cinematográfica, que recoge el continuo proceso de la acción, puede compararse a una serie de cuadros que ilustran las acciones principales. (Antonio Castro Leal, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, I, p. 27)

The episodic form was used for a variety of reasons: to reflect the general atmosphere or to narrate the most outstanding events of an era; to facilitate the simple and direct presentation of the action; and to permit the novelist to present a panoramic view of society and history or a broad statement of his thematic concerns. It is worthwhile noting, however, that, notwithstanding the episodic format, the reality that is reflected is rarely presented in a totally fragmented manner since in most novels there exists an underlying cohesiveness or a basic internal unity.

The use of a certain style of language is also closely linked to the desire to accommodate the form of expression to a new perspective on reality. The novelists of the Revolution had recourse to popular speech as a means of harmonizing their compositions with the essential, social reality of Mexico.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, they concentrated on clear and direct narration of events, avoided long and unnecessary descriptions and made use of pertinent exchanges of dialogue. In some cases the resulting style might almost be described as documentary, although such



categorical extremes are generally mitigated by the novelist's use of a creative or literary language of a kind that is not generally found in documentaries.

As novelists attempted to record the changing social and political circumstances of Mexico more fully, their works naturally included, in certain instances, elements of chronicles or documentary analysis. Consequently, the new direction taken by the novel seemed to approximate it, in general terms, to history and journalism, a circumstance that Julia Hernández deplored: "No se sabe, dónde acaba la novela y dónde comienza la Historia. Abunda en ella [la novela] el criterio periodístico. Tiene exceso de dramatismo. Está limitada por el costumbrismo. Frecuentemente le falta profundidad estética."<sup>9</sup> Adalbert Dessau seemed to be in agreement with Hernández's evaluation of the role of history since he viewed the novel of the Revolution as consisting of "la íntima unión de novela (es decir literatura) y crónica (es decir historia)" (*La novela de la Revolución Mexicana*, p. 12). It is true that nearly every novel of the Revolution incorporates some aspect of history, whether as background or as an essential component of the plot. Understandably, journalism has also been viewed as an integral partner in this relationship since, like history, it consists of an account of the happenings and problems of a particular period of time, and, like the novel, may be seen as the reconstitution of the events or milieu of the past. Nonetheless, the validity of the view expressed by Berta Gamboa de Camino concerning the predominance of journalism and history must be seriously





questioned:

The novel of the Mexican Revolution has an undeniable value as history, almost nothing of it being fiction. The actions, personages, and scenes have been taken from real life. The novelists have brought their technique into play to unite these diverse elements to give them more or less consistent recounting, to present them by means of an adequate form. The journalists have made stories and narratives out of isolated episodes, and elaborated chronicles out of their own personal memories. In both cases, imagination has played an insignificant role....<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the three genres, journalism, history and the novel, complement each other, since all three, although focused from different points of view and motivated by different objectives depict aspects of the same reality.<sup>11</sup>

The relationship between the novel and journalism was of a more specific and concrete nature. Thematically, they complemented each other in the description of contemporary reality, and in their role as conscience and guide to the movement, reflecting the concerns and interests of the revolutionaries and scrutinizing social themes and national development. José Luis Martínez, specifying the role of literature in the Revolution, declared: "La Revolución mexicana ha encontrado, pues, en la literatura, una de sus más firmes y constantes aliadas. En las letras aparecieron las primeras simientes ideológicas de aquel movimiento social y, cuando sobrevino la lucha, nuestras letras iniciaron no solamente su propia revolución intelectual, sino que expresaron y exaltaron poderosamente la heroica empresa de nuestro pueblo" (Problemas literarios, pp. 158-159). Journalism clearly had a similar role.



The focus on nationalism and the Revolution was essential to the informative press, since, during the decade of military campaigns and ideological conflicts, it served as the source of news and of official propaganda. Once the period of combat was over, the role of the journalist changed from that of informative reporter on the course of the Revolution to that of editorial commentator and promoter of social and revolutionary doctrines. Between 1920 and 1930 newspapers undertook this promotion through literature also. El Universal Ilustrado, under the directorship of Carlos Noriega Hope, encouraged the publication of novels dealing with revolutionary themes; similarly, major dailies such as El Nacional and El Universal welcomed and promoted the publication of novels written by Mexican writers.

Critics have also indicated a close relationship in matters of style, owing to a number of analagous factors: the use of an episodic form, direct narration and explicit language; the presence of many writers who were both novelists and journalists; and the fact that both the novel and journalism often seemed to be preoccupied with identical issues. According to Luis de Bolonia, the content was not only the same, but was presented in the same way: "El nuevo procedimiento consiste fundamentalmente en copiar literalmente el contexto de la vida que se desarrolla en torno del novelista, [el que] la traslada, generalmente en bloque, sin mayores consideraciones estéticas o meramente formales. De ahí surgen en estilo periodístico, directo y con frecuencia descuidado, a borbotones, retazos de la





vida y del paisaje mexicano."<sup>12</sup> Ernest Moore, with a slightly different perspective, considered that the material was treated in the same way because the writers in both genres were the same people: "In their place [of writers of the pre-1920 period] arose a large group composed of former opposition journalists and fighters from the ranks of the rebel armies. These men were not literati, consequently their prose lacked polish, style and form. They felt keenly the tragic grandeur of the revolution and they tried to convey their visual and emotional impressions to their readers."<sup>13</sup> John Rutherford also sought to understand why the novels of the Revolution "had been conceived in the pages of the newspaper", and concluded that "this was no mere coincidence; on the contrary, several factors combined to make it almost inevitable that journalism would exert a strong influence upon Mexican prose fiction of the 1930s". According to Rutherford, there were three factors affecting this situation: the social upheaval and the large number of newsworthy and sensational events made journalism very relevant in society and the journalist an important and essential figure; then, in post-Revolutionary Mexico, journalists alone had any wide experience and practice in the art of writing; finally, Rutherford believed that the new style used by Azuela and defended by the critics, on account of its succinct, direct and realistic narration, was exactly the style of the journalist (Mexican Society in the Revolution, pp. 62-63).

However, one must be careful not to accept these evaluations without first critically assessing the entire



spectrum of novels published between 1910 and 1940 and analysing the compositions of specific authors within that period.

Although the novel may be validly related to journalism, it is also necessary to remember the essential differences in the focus and objectives of both genres and to apply the criteria mentioned in our discussion of the novel and journalism in Chapter I in order to verify if, in fact, the two modes are similar in this period of the history of Mexican literature.

It was between 1910 and 1920, during the period of armed conflict itself, that novelists first began to write about the Revolution; however, their prose by no means constituted the main trend in novels at that time, even though such notable writers as Azuela had already allied themselves with the movement, had formulated the main characteristics of the genre, and were giving factual accounts of the contemporary situation. Generally speaking, both the reading public and the critics ignored the novel of the Revolution in favour of literature of a more refined, artistic or entertaining character. Accordingly, the predominant traits of prose composition in that decade were provided by those trends that conformed to these principles, to wit, novels written in accordance with previously existing aesthetic concepts; those intended solely to entertain; and the 'colonialista' novels.

The novels formulated on the basis of existing aesthetic concepts were actually a continuation of tendencies prevalent in





the 'porfirista' period. Not surprisingly, the most outstanding examples were written by 'porfirista' novelists such as Federico Gamboa and José López-Portillo y Rojas, although later novelists also perpetuated the trend. Martín Gómez Palacio is a case in point. In 1915, the same year in which *Los de abajo* appeared for the first time, he published *La loca imaginación*, a novel which, as a Romantic, 'costumbrista' and modernist work, clearly prolongs the literary norms of the previous era. Gómez Palacio ignored contemporary political reality totally, and chose to elaborate timeless themes, to touch the sensibilities of his readers and to write scenes of sensitive, frustrated love. His work is a failure since the novelist retains a pervasive control, interjects direct comments to the reader, and disrupts the action in order to interpolate 'costumbrista' scenes or moralizing digressions. Inevitably, *La loca imaginación* epitomizes the worst in nineteenth century techniques. In spite of attempts to conform to literary taste, the style is slow, circumspect and insipid, encumbered by elements of superficial sentimentalism and the romantic imagination of the novelist. These characteristics are aptly portrayed in the ending of the novel in the description of the melancholy parting of the protagonists, victims of an impossible and unrequited love:

Ella lo vió [el tren], bañarse de luz y despedir destellos plateados. Y lo vió por último salir del campo aclarado y desaparecer completamente, sintiendo entonces grande cansancio en sus pupilas inmensamente abiertas, que habían realizado potente esfuerzo por seguir en su carrera al tren tenebroso que le arrebatara a Enrique. Y volviendo, instantes después, el rostro a sus amigas, sonrió trágicamente, al



escuchar alguna frase festiva.

Así se manifestaba, por la primera vez en la ausencia del amado, su dolor, ante el cual no protestaba. Su dolor de mujer, su dolor perfume, su dolor vida, así se manifestaba, en risa de llanto...

Entre tanto Enrique, pegada la frente dolorida al cristal de su ventanilla, contemplaba el paisaje distraídamente, sin apreciar formas ni colores.

De pronto su mirada alcanzó un charco de agua llovediza que fulgía a lo lejos. Solazáronse sus ojos con su vívido aspecto. De pedrería preciosa se antojaba el tal charco, acariciada el agua turbia con el beso de un mal rayo de sol (p. 184)

Gómez Palacio makes use of Nature as a faithful reflection of the state of mind of the characters, especially the protagonist. One of the best examples of this trait is offered in the description of the young people who, on returning to the village after a joyful day in the country, will be greeted by tragic news:

El paso por la exuberante flora, entre parvadas de codornices y otros bípodos ágiles y pedantillos, y por la extensa llanura que luego se continuaba, fue callado y triste, como alegre y comunicativa había sido la marcha de en la mañana. Alma por alma, como fieles espejos, copiaban la melancolía letal de las cosas pródigas de belleza, de cuya superficie se iba desprendiendo dolorosamente toda claridad. (p. 120)

Although this passage illustrates the pedestrian excesses of the 'refined' style of the period, one can, at the same time, appreciate Gómez Palacio's command of suitable vocabulary and his ability to create atmosphere.<sup>14</sup> However, the anachronistic style and the artificiality of tone, coupled with the tedious emotionalism, result in a novel that is more interesting as a contrast to the work of Azuela, with which it is contemporary,





than for its own merit.

Although between 1910 and 1920 Azuela continually directed the attention of his readers to social and political problems in Mexico, the tendency prevalent among most novelists was to write solely in order to amuse the reading public, who, for its part, wished to be entertained. In response to this demand, Diego Arenas Guzmán wrote El maestro de la capilla (1918), a simple story of young love, frustrated by a variety of complications, but finally sanctified through the unselfish love and supernatural intervention of the church organist ('el maestro de la capilla'). Arenas Guzmán's style, reminiscent of 'barroquismo', is characterized by long sentences and a poetic, grandiloquent tone. The atmosphere of romantic sensitivity is well reflected in the description of the love that is born between Gabriel and Eulalia:

...desde pocos días después de que se conocieron, nacía y se vivificaba el amor que había de fundir en uno solo, sus dos espíritus igualmente apasionados por el arte e igualmente sensitivos a las manifestaciones de Belleza. Podría decirse que en el seno inefable de la Armonía, las dos almas iban a celebrar su espiritual himeneo.  
(p. 116)

Dedicated to composing an ingenuous, light narration to amuse and touch the reader, the novelist shuns all reference to or compromise with contemporary circumstances. The same situation is apparent in the short novels by Francisco Monterde, El mayor Fidel García (1915) and Lencho (1915). Although the plot in both cases is based on the Revolution and some of its tragic consequences, the Revolution is no more than a background



against which the actions and emotions of the characters are enacted, with the specific purpose of touching and entertaining the reader.

Towards 1920 there appeared another literary trend, reminiscent of the patriotic dedication and the sense of national awareness evident in the novels of the Revolution, but quite distinct in style and content. This was the 'colonialista' movement,<sup>15</sup> whose period of prominence lasted from 1918, the year in which Francisco Monterde wrote his first 'colonialista' novels, until 1926, the year of publication of Genaro Estrada's Pero Galín, considered to be the best of the novels produced and an effective parody of the 'colonialista' style.<sup>16</sup> Other novelists of the movement were Artemio del Valle-Arizpe, Julio Jiménez Rueda and Ermilo Abreu Gómez,<sup>17</sup> all of whose works were an attempt at recapturing the essence of Mexico's past while examining the fundamental values of a nation whose mentality and collective conscience had changed so much with recent events. In spite of a diversity of objectives and points of view among the novelists, their works were founded on a number of common elements; the re-creation of history, the juxtaposition of fantasy and reality, the desire to entertain the reader, and a tendency towards didacticism. The first of these facets was doubtless the most important, since almost all the novels were based on historical events. However, as M. P. González explained, history was closely tied to aesthetic and literary motivations:

... género nuevo de carácter fluido y rebelde a





la clasificación. Fluctúa entre la historia pura y la novela. Aunque todos estos libros se han escrito a base de sólida documentación, de investigaciones serias y prolijas lecturas, todos rehuyen al aparato erudito y la fría objetividad de los estudios históricos. Se caracterizan principalmente por el propósito artístico.... Cada uno de estos autores ve en estos temas preteritos un motivo estético y, sin desdeñar la verdad histórica, la han embellecido con su imaginación poética.<sup>18</sup>

The interweaving of purely imaginative elements, particularly supernatural intervention and cloak and dagger intrigue, within an historical framework, was similar in technique to the style of earlier Romantic writers. Its purpose was to reconstruct the atmosphere of the past, while heightening the value of the work as entertainment, an important aspect of 'colonialista' literature. Hence, the novelist selected themes and historical events primarily for their potential as entertainment and the probability of their capturing and holding the attention of the reader. The didactic element was derived from two sources, being in part a reflection of the author's own prejudice, but also a return to the didacticism inherent in the literature of the Colonial era. Frequently, the novelist was concerned with contrasting what was considered to be the wholesome, Christian lifestyle of the provinces with the immoral, degenerate and vain way of life of the capital; alternatively, he sought to exalt the merit of religion and the value of a devout, Christian life.<sup>19</sup>

In order to accommodate an historical and fantastic perspective on the past, the 'colonialista' novelists developed a distinctive style, reviving archaisms and attempting to re-



create the written language and manner of speech of the period with which they dealt. However, their attempts generally miscarried, either because the language was unconvincing or inappropriate, or because it was so exaggerated that it failed to satisfy its purposes. Genaro Estrada made this practice and its faults the target of one of his attacks in Pero Galín:

Cada objeto era una evocación; cada evocación era un tema. Y para el desarrollo de cada tema se acomodó un léxico especial, hecho de giros conceptuosos y torturados, de olvidados arcaísmos, de frases culteranos, de gongorismos alambicados, que se enrollaban y desenrollaban como un laberinto, que llamaban a las cosas por tropos inverosímiles y que, cargados de adornos pesados y crujientes, afectaban la resurrección de una lengua que nunca ha existido. Surgió, en una palabra, la fábula. (pp. 12-13)<sup>20</sup>

The novels were also highly theatrical, as much the consequence of the use of dialogue as of the action narrated in the novel. Humour, either of a witty, festive variety, or of a macabre sort, while characteristic of the 'colonialista' novel, served to reinforce the author's intention of amusing the reader. Perhaps the best example appeared in Genaro Estrada's Pero Galín, a parody of the excesses of the movement. Typically, Estrada epitomized the attitudes of the movement in his example of the creation of a title for a 'colonialista' novel, indicating the changes necessary for a proper 'colonialista' tone by placing the appropriate options in parentheses: "Esta [Aquesta] es la verdadera crónica de lo que aconteció al Caballero de Santiago don Uriel de Lanzagorta, en ocasión de la publicación [del aparecimiento] de su relación [mametro] que se imprime [estampa] con el nombre de 'La Famosa Villa de Mexitlán





y sus Primitivos Pobladores, y de otros sucesos [subcesos] que verá el curioso lector en el curso de la misma [misma]' " (pp. 13-14). By pointing out the limitations of the movement and indicating the need to relate this form of literature to the contemporary role of Mexican letters, Estrada brought the 'colonialista' movement to a formal end (although not to a definitive one; see note 17).

In fact, although the 'colonialista' movement is related to similar trends in foreign literature, in particular the historical novel and the re-evaluation of the Colonial period, its appearance is the direct result of the Revolution. In contrast to the novelists of the Revolution, however, the 'colonialistas' opted for an intellectual and artistic withdrawal from contemporary reality in order to focus on Mexican culture since the Conquest, and the literary and aesthetic glorification of past achievements that might provide a firm foundation for modern Mexico.

It is quite evident that, in the decade between 1910 and 1920, the majority of the novelists wrote according to criteria which gave preference to the creative or escapist use of imagination before the task of depicting the contemporary situation. As a consequence, it can hardly be said that they adopted a journalistic style. Certainly, novelists of this period, such as Diego Arenas Guzmán, Francisco Monterde as well as many of the 'colonialista' writers, stressed rapid development and succinct narration, but such a tendency can be explained very easily, in the light of the instability of the



social and political situation, which impeded a careful or extended creative process, and the editorial difficulties that hampered the orderly publication of literature. If the 'colonialista' movement, probably the most important literary trend of that period, is considered more specifically, it is not surprising to find that it bears no relationship to the style of the newspaper, since the very nature of the style and content of the novel excluded any possible journalistic influence. It was Genaro Estrada who indicated more precisely (even when referring to the contemporary period as in Pero Galín) why journalism did not enter into the 'colonialista' literature:

Nada de periódicos. Los periódicos, con sus noticias truculentas, con su afebrada oportunidad, con sus comentarios sobre la política militante, apuraban sus nervios [de Pero Galín]. Sólo en algunas ocasiones, cuando visitaba la casa de algún anticuario erudito, hojeaba The Connoisseur, la revista inglesa que con sus anuncios de ventas pasma a los coleccionistas de muebles, de porcelanas y de cuadros. (p. 37)

Notwithstanding this situation, there did exist a superficial, material relationship between the two genres since 'colonialista' compositions were frequently promoted or published in the literary or Sunday supplements of the newspapers. A few examples from Excelsior will suffice to demonstrate the matter: July 15, 1923, "Aventuras misteriosas / Conseja colonial"; May 10, 1925, "Fué una maldición / Leyenda colonial", by Laura E. Rosell; May 17, 1925, "El arte de los virreyes", by Carlos F. Ancell; December 16, 1926, "Santa Rosa de Lima...", a story of seventeenth century Peru by Carlos de





Gante. However, this was an incidental exchange. Just as 'colonialista' literature, with its distinctive style and tendencies, had no basis for a relationship with journalism, likewise journalism, as the chronicler and ideological conscience of the Revolution, was completely alien to the prose fiction which appeared in its literary sections, published in response to the reading public's demand for amusing, escapist literature.

It was after 1920 that the Revolution really obtained preeminence as the principal source for the composition of novels,<sup>21</sup> a situation stimulated by two important events. After the assassination of Pancho Villa in July, 1923, Mexicans experienced a resurgence of interest in the conflict of the previous decade. At the same time, a literary controversy concerning the worth of modern Mexican literature, especially the works of Mariano Azuela as an innovative and noteworthy novelist, gave rise to the active development of the literature of the Revolution. It became almost mandatory for every writer in search of critical acceptance to produce his own 'novel of the Revolution', with the net effect of an unparalleled proliferation of such novels between 1928 and 1940. By the same token, once novels of the Revolution had acquired a certain respectability, literary critics increasingly turned their attention to these new compositions in order to establish their relative merit within Mexican literature and to define the modes



and techniques characteristic of the genre. Among the most outstanding elements frequently cited as characteristics were the direct and rapid narration of incidents, an episodic development of plot, a journalistic style, and a general lack of literary expertise on the part of the novelist. Indeed, it was common to attribute these characteristics almost indiscriminately to every novelist of the Revolution, regardless of the thematic orientation of his work or of the ability displayed in its composition. It goes without saying, however, that a valid judgement of the novel of the Revolution and its relationship with journalism requires that the critic avoid such ready generalizations and undertake some consideration both of the work of individual authors and of the differing tendencies that affected the novel of the Revolution as a whole. The point of departure for such an undertaking must necessarily be the work of Mariano Azuela, not only because he initiated the genre, but also because he is its most outstanding representative.

Although Azuela's reputation rests largely on novels that portray the Revolution, his literary career did not begin with the onset of the fighting. His first prose narratives were published in 1896 and were followed by a series of 'porfirista' novels which, in many respects, prefigured his later compositions. The first novels adhered to the prevailing literary tendencies of the turn of the century and showed the influence of modernism, French naturalism, realism and romantic sentimentalism. To this extent, Azuela's style was similar to





that of other Mexican writers of the period, who were affected by the same tendencies and who endeavoured, nonetheless, to reflect the reality of their own environment. As J. S. Brushwood stated, perhaps too categorically, "ni desde el punto de vista de la ideología ni desde el punto de vista del desarrollo novelístico hay en Los fracasados ni en Mala yerba algo que no puede encontrarse igualmente en otras obras de la época de Díaz. ...las primeras novelas de Azuela no fueron clamores en el desierto".<sup>22</sup> Azuela's political stance was, in fact, that of an opposition liberal: he criticized the social injustice that permeated Mexican society without ever evincing the conviction that a Revolution was imperative in order to bring about necessary changes. Azuela's thematic preoccupations were fairly constant in this period, but his style did undergo some evolution. María Luisa (1907), with its subjective narration, its moralizing and its heavy overtones of romanticism and naturalism, clearly belongs to the literary tendencies of the nineteenth century, as is illustrated in the following description of María Luisa's death:

La enferma quedó sumergida en el mar de recuerdos que acababa de evocar el practicante. Su vida de alegría perenne entre los estudiantes que ahora no la conocían siquiera. ¡Tal era su demacración en sólo tres años de vagabundear!... El horror retrospectivo al placer sensual, que ahora calosfriaba su agotado cuerpo; el espanto a la prostitución brutalmente impuesta por la ley de las gentes honradas; su odio reconcentrado a esa vida de venta de su propio cuerpo; y el alcohol, ¡el bendito alcohol salvador!, el que la hacía olvidar toda su miseria, el que embruteciéndola más y más cada día le daba la calma y el anonadamiento....

María Luisa tuvo la dicha de expirar en el



momento en que una visión divina, en su angustia mortal, había aparecido para cerrarle los ojos y recoger los últimos estremecimientos de su corazón. Quizás, al reconocerlo, la emoción tremenda había venido a darle la muerte más dulce que pudiera desear. La dicha había quedado fijada en su última sonrisa, petrificada en su semblante por la rigidez cadavérica.<sup>23</sup>

In Mala verba (1909), Azuela wrote more realistically, and events were narrated more rapidly and directly in order to present an increasingly acerbic criticism of the social and political wrongs of contemporary Mexico. The contrast between the two novels, notwithstanding their respective melodramatic tone, is evident in a comparison of the description of Marcela's death scene with that of María Luisa:

...Marcela se yergue con trágica fiereza. Pasmosa serenidad se adueña de ella; firme, con su vela en la mano, seguro el pulso, se encamina al cuarto contiguo. De un humilde claviijero de pared penden las ropas de Gertrudis. La prueba es dura y no puede resistir; su cabeza se hunde entre los lienzos flácidos y sus ojos se mojan. Pero no hay tiempo que perder, su debilidad es de segundos; se endereza, estira su brazo y del bolsillo de un pantalón saca un cuchillo largo y puntiagudo. Lo esconde tras la floja blusa y sus dedos doblados ocultan la pata de venado de su empunadora.

.....

Julían se lleva la botella a la boca y Marcela se levanta. Pero sus piernas flaquean, su mano tremula y se rebela, y cuando en un impulso formidable e imposible como el de un febricitante bajo horrible pesadilla alza su brazo, sus dedos se entreabren y la cuchilla cae tembloreando sonora en los ladrillos. (I, pp. 221-222)

Azuela's second period, to which his novels of the Revolution belong, corresponds to the decade of the Revolutionary conflict itself.<sup>24</sup> Through these works, Azuela established a new tendency in Mexican prose, although, as we have noted, his innovations were not critically acclaimed until





a decade after the publication of Los de abajo, and even then in the midst of considerable controversy. In 1924, Julio Jiménez Rueda initiated the debate by stating that contemporary Mexican literature was effeminate and worthless.<sup>25</sup> Francisco Monterde countered by citing Los de abajo as an excellent example of its virility and strength. Victoriano Salado Alvarez, taking Jiménez Rueda's point of view, adjudged Los de abajo to be neither literary nor revolutionary, so therefore unworthy of consideration and recognition. He denied that Mexico had a revolutionary literature on the grounds that it had no revolutionaries, men who truly wished to change society; hence, he rejected the idea of Los de abajo as a revolutionary novel. To conclude, he attempted to show that the novel was not literature because of "inútiles repeticiones, faltas garrafales de estilo", and a general lack of literary technique.<sup>26</sup> In his opinion, Los de abajo, at best, had a certain documentary value.

It was Monterde's assessment of Azuela as a creative innovator that prevailed, but the debate as to whether Azuela's novels have any value as literature or are simply a form of journalistic documentation has persisted. Martí Casanovas considered the documentary aspect of the novel as its only merit: "...Los de abajo, maravillosa como documento, pero por excesiva cercanía, falta de amplitud suficiente y de contenido ideológico, para que no dé una impresión pesimista y un panorama sombrío, desolador, de la revolución mexicana, cuya grandiosidad no se trasluce a través de sus páginas."<sup>27</sup> Jaime Torres Bodet, in contrast, while not unmindful of the shortcomings of the



novel, found much to praise in Azuela's ability:

Sin preocupaciones de estilo, más interesado en descubrir a sus personajes que en describirlos con la delicada lentitud del prosador artista, las cualidades de Mariano Azuela son las que frecuentemente hallamos en el buen novelista tradicional: el sentido pintoresco de los tipos, la inteligencia teatral de las situaciones y, sobre todo, el don de una psicología esquemática; por eso mismo, a primera vista, más impresionante.<sup>28</sup>

Antonio Magaña Esquivel also emphasized the merit of Azuela's innovations: "Es preciso reconocer que Mariano Azuela surgió [sic] una nueva manera de novelar--estilo directo, descripción de la conducta correlativamente a la del mundo interior, predominio del diálogo, pintura en movimiento; tales son sus características fundamentales."<sup>29</sup>

In reality, Azuela's style is misleading. Superficially, it is direct, episodic, with a rapid, succinct narration of the events of the Revolution, used to record both personal impressions and historical, military developments. However, Los de abajo is the product of an artistic intention, a fact stressed by Azuela himself. In a definitive clarification of his ideas concerning the relative creative and journalistic elements of his novels, Azuela denied that he used a documentary style: "...la mayoría de los sucesos referidos en la novela no fueron presenciados por mí, sino contruídos con retazos de visiones de gentes y acontecimientos. Los que la llaman relato no saben de la misa la media, si con este título intentan decir que escribí como el que hace crónica o reportazgo" (III, p. 1082). Moreover, he emphasized the role played by his own imagination: "Muchos





sucesos están referidos en forma absolutamente distinta de como los presencié" (III, p. 1056).

It is true that Azuela, as his own statements verify, always endeavoured to confirm his portrayal of the everyday, historical reality of the Revolution by corroborating newspaper accounts and eye-witness reports:

De todo se me puede acusar, menos de haber deformado la verdad. Mis testigos son la prensa diaria, de donde es fácil desentrañarla. Dar un trasunto del medio y del momento que he estado viviendo ha sido uno de los propósitos fundamentales de la mayor parte de mis novelas: que en unos dos centenares de páginas se encuentre lo que sólo se obtendrá anegándose en un mar de papel impreso, desde la hoja suelta anónima hasta el folleto o libro bien documentado. (III, p. 1098)

However, a close examination of *Los de abajo* shows that his representation of the Revolution is contained within an artistic framework dependent on specific literary techniques and a balanced narrative structure.<sup>30</sup> The three parts of the novel are proportional in their development and length: the first, of twenty-one chapters, traces the progress of Demetrio Macías, from his first uprising to his highest achievements; the second and third parts, of fourteen and seven chapters respectively, relate the decline of Macías and end with his death. The action unfolds in a circular movement, and Macías returns to his point of departure and dies where he had won his first victory. The plot has certain epic qualities,<sup>31</sup> not necessarily with respect to the Revolution, which is presented from a somewhat pessimistic point of view, but with reference to human conflicts and suffering. The essential aspects of the Revolution are



depicted through a series of pertinent episodes which portray the motivations of the revolutionaries, the brutality of the conflict and the chronology of the historical events. Yet, Azuela's creative ability surpasses that of mere objective description. The characters and events are universal statements about the Revolution and the fight for intangible ideals, concepts portrayed most often through the characters' dialogue. This technique not only serves to express the ideas of a few revolutionaries opposed to the materialism and pragmatism common to the majority, but also to depict the diverse motives of the combatants, exposing their lives and affiliations with the campaign, and demonstrating their failure to understand the concepts that should have provided a basis for their struggle. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Azuela did not encumber the development of his plot with inappropriate interpolations and moralizing digressions, although he did not refrain from presenting his own views and sense of disillusion. The bitter denunciation made by Alberto Solís, moments before his ironic death, is typical of Azuela's pertinent use of dialogue:

Hay que esperar un poco. A que no haya combatientes, a que no se oigan más disparos que los de las turbas entregadas a las delicias del saqueo; a que resplandezca diáfana, como una fona de agua, la psicología de nuestra raza, condensada en dos palabras: ¡robar, matar!... ¡Qué chasco, amigo mío, si los que venimos a derribar a un miserable asesino, resultásemos los obreros de un enorme pedestal donde pudieran levantarse cien o doscientos mil monstruos de la misma especie!... ¡Pueblo sin ideales, pueblo de tiranos...! ¡Lástima de sangre! (I, p. 368)

His literary techniques also included the lyrical, yet adept,





use of Nature as a parallel reflection or contrast to the human situation. In the description of Camila's sadness in Los de abajo, Nature is shown to express a concomitant sympathy:

A esa hora, como todos los días, la penumbra apagaba en un tono mate las rocas calcinadas, los ramajes quemados por el sol y los musgos resecos. Soplaban un viento tibio en débil rumor, meciendo las hojas lanceoladas de la tierna milpa. Todo era igual; pero en las piedras, en las ramas secas, en el aire embalsamado y en la hojarasca, Camila encontraba ahora algo muy extraño como si todas aquellas cosas tuvieran mucha tristeza. (I, p. 350)

By contrast, the day of Macías' death begins as a "mañana de nupcias" and on this occasion Nature serves as a contrast to the brutality of the conflict and the tragedy of the protagonist:

La sierra está de gala; sobre sus cúspides inaccesibles cae una niebla albísima como un crespon de nieve sobre la cabeza de una novia.

Y al pie de una resquebrajadura enorme y suntuosa como pórtico de vieja catedral, Demetrio Macías, con los ojos fijos para siempre, sigue apuntando con el cañón de su fusil... (I, p. 418)

Such descriptions are certainly not those which one would readily attribute to journalists, and even in military accounts Azuela avoided a documentary style, in preference for a more artistically contrived and evocative narrative:

Veinte bombas estallaron a un tiempo en medio de los federales, que, llenos de espanto, se irguieron con los ojos desmesuradamente abiertos. Mas antes de que pudieran darse cuenta cabal del trance, otras veinte bombas reventaban con fragor, dejando un reguero de muertos y heridos....

En vano un viejo sargento increpa a los soldados y los injuria, con la esperanza de una reorganización salvadora. Aquello no es más que una correría de ratas dentro de la trampa. Unos van a tomar la puertecilla de la escalera y allí caen acribillados a tiros por Demetrio; otros se echan a los pies de aquella veintena de espectros



de cabeza y pechos oscuros como de hierro, de largos calzones blancos desgarrados, que les bajan hasta los guaraches. En el campanario algunos luchan por salir, de entre los muertos que han caído sobre ellos. (I, pp. 358-359)

The episodic development of the plot in Los de abajo follows a chronological order, with the omission of whatever does not concern the central characters, in order to focus directly upon the rise and fall of Macías and the part he plays in the Revolution. Azuela never subordinates the basic plot to tangential considerations, so that scenes which appear to be digressions on the brutality of the war, the lack of revolutionary ideals, or the suffering of the people are in reality, pertinent to the full portrayal of the characters. In fact, all scenes are integral components of the narrative and harmonize with the essential unity of the work. Overall, Los de abajo is a moving depiction of the Revolution and its adherents, developed through the adept use of artistic techniques and intended to capture the essence of the conflict. To declare the novel a documentary narrative written with a journalistic style is to fail to appreciate Azuela's depth of perception and the impact of his innovative creativity as initiator of the novel of the Revolution.

It is presumed by many that the style evolved by Azuela came to him naturally and was therefore used unconsciously as the most adequate manner in which to present his material. F. R. Morton was a typical representative of this opinion:

Nunca ha querido él hacer 'literatura', sino mostrar por medio de la novela o el cuento corto, la realidad respecto a la verdadera vida mexicana





y cuáles son los problemas más salientes que trae consigo. ... Azuela nunca se ha preocupado por su estilo ni por los tecnicismos del mecanismo de la novela. Empezó escribiendo para hacer constar la verdad como él mismo la vió. (Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 63)

But this point of view has been very appropriately rectified by Luis Leal, who referred to Azuela's own comments in order to refute such criticism:

For the critics who have thought that Los de abajo is a product of the artist unconscious of his craft, the following statement by the author may come as a surprise: "The novelist surely takes the elements that go into his work from the world around him or from books. But such a work is not limited to the simple accumulation of materials of which it is built; they must be structured into a creative work, into a new body having its own life."<sup>32</sup>

Azuela's declaration, taken in conjunction with the creative ability clearly evident in Los de abajo, suffices to show that the novel of the Revolution was from its very beginning firmly rooted in the techniques of literary composition and not in journalistic reportage, as many have held. Azuela's method of narration was evolved in order to enhance his depiction of an immediate political and social situation; the personal commentaries that he incorporated into his work serve only to raise it further beyond simple documentary narration of problems which plagued a particular period of Mexican history.

However much later novelists were influenced by Azuela, there is one point which separates him from the majority of other writers: Azuela never worked as a journalist in any capacity. His contact with journalism was limited to the few pieces of literary texts he contributed to a number of



newspapers and magazines.<sup>33</sup> This is not to intimate that being a journalist necessarily influenced the composition of novels. Other major novelists of the Revolution did contribute to both genres, developed a novelistic style distinct from that of Azuela and yet avoided a journalistic or documentary style. It is therefore appropriate to evaluate the style of major novelists, such as Martín Luis Guzmán and José Rubén Romero, to assess the nature of their literary endeavour and its relationship to journalism.

Although the novels of Martín Luis Guzmán, El águila y la serpiente (1928) and La sombra del caudillo (1929), were both based on historical events in Mexico, they have outstanding merit as literature. El águila y la serpiente is the author's recollections of his experiences with the Villista forces from 1913 to 1915, recounted episodically with the intention of portraying broad developments of the fighting, combined with personal asides, interesting anecdotes and the novelist's own analysis and philosophy. Although closely related to History and to the newspaper (the novel was published serially in El Universal in 1926), the work clearly shows Guzmán's talents. In a 1928 evaluation of the novel, Jaime Torres Bodet declared: "...constituye, hasta ahora, el anecdotario más rico...de esta época de nuestra guerra civil. Los efectos que logra están obtenidos...merced a un esfuerzo de recreación artística que da a sus aciertos un mérito más: el de una técnica más estricta" ("Perspectivas de la literatura...", 1928). Guzmán's artistry is evident in the elegant and concise style, in the adept use of a





refined, correct and exact language, in the firmly controlled narration and the effective building of interest and atmosphere. Guzmán's description of an encounter with Villa offers an excellent example:

Así, fue pasando el tiempo. El gris de la tarde había venido aclarándose, azulándose, plateándose. Ahora brillaba en el cielo el polvo luminoso de los postreros rayos del sol; lo cortaban, de rato en rato, los trazos oscuros de los pájaros. Mi alma se disolvía en aquel azul con placidez como un convaleciente, y gracias a ellos, poco a poco, mi ritmo interno se fue acordando con el externo.

... Crepúsculo y canto vinieron a ser una sola cosa: los dos lejanos, los dos envolventes... Yo escuchaba y sentía, olvidado de cuanto me rodeaba... Un grupo de jinetes se precisó y desprendió desde el fondo de la calle formada por los vagones en fila. Sin desasosiego lo vi avanzar: me embargaban la tarde y el canto. El soldado seguía en su musitación: "No sea, mi alma, que abajo te aguarden..."

... Pero, de súbito, en el grupo de hombres a caballo, reencontré una silueta familiar, una figura conocida... Al paso de su soberbio alazán, Villa se acercaba... (El águila y la serpiente, p. 422)

The same stylistic precision is evident even in Guzmán's account of historical events, such as, for example, his narration of the triumphant entry of the 'convencionistas' into Mexico City.

There is nothing of the informative, newspaper style here:

Fue entonces cosa de ver, por nuestra parte, la precipitación con que se lanzaron por todas las vías férreas los interminables cordones de nuestros trenes militares y civiles, movidos de pronto no por urgencias guerreras o políticas, sino por nuestra ansia alborozada de ir a tomar posesión del magnífico despojo que los carrancistas nos abandonaron en su huida: la ciudad de México. Nosotros conjeturábamos (y aun sabíamos de fijo, por cálculos no muy aleatorios) que el gobierno de Eulalio fracasaría; pero sabíamos también que en el deporte mexicano de la guerra civil la ciudad de México--acaso por estar



en un valle maravilloso--hace el papel de las copas en los torneos atléticos, se siente dueño del campeonato político, mantiene su record por encima de los demás, así esté expuesto a perderlo a cada minuto en manos de los audaces que quieran y sepan arrebatársela. (pp. 383-384)<sup>34</sup>

Although Guzmán was again inspired by history when writing La sombra del caudillo, the events are not as immediately evident or verifiable as in El águila y la serpiente. Historical data, skillfully interwoven into a plot of Guzmán's own design, is re-created with artistic liberty to produce an entertaining literary masterpiece. J. S. Brushwood found much to criticize in the resulting novel: "The book is almost a great novel, but falls short precisely because the author, an excellent reporter, lacked the imagination of the novelist. His ability to re-create did not measure up to his ability to describe the observed" (Mexico in Its Novel, p. 202). However, if one examines the narrative techniques of the novel, one finds more than mere journalistic reconstruction of history. The style of La sombra del caudillo is similar to that of El águila y la serpiente, but its narrative qualities are superior. It is a more entertaining and effective recounting of historical events in the guise of a novel. Moreover, its evaluation of the period is a valuable synthesis of the essential political and human reactions with respect to the appraisal of the fighting and the depiction of the ideals and the shortcomings of the events. The resulting analysis is not only applicable to the national arena, but considers universal, humanist concerns as well. Thus, although Guzmán was well versed in the informative and historical role of





the newspaper, he avoided its limitations and achieved an artistic re-creation and evaluative conceptualization of Mexican history.<sup>35</sup>

The styles used by Guzmán and Azuela, although different in form and artistic merit, represent two of the most significant methods of dealing with the themes of the Revolution. In his novels, José Rubén Romero developed a third, important alternative. The majority of Romero's novels are first person narratives based on the novelist's own experiences and his 'costumbrista' observations of the provincial atmosphere of Michoacán. His descriptions of the life and concerns of the characters, often presented through the eyes of the 'pícaro', to whom Romero gave new life in the Mexican novel, frequently convey the humourous or ludicrous perspectives of social inequities. But, his humour is also rather black or bitter, a reflection of the novelist's disillusionment with respect to stifling social conventions and political injustices. His style, far from journalistic, is more reminiscent of traditional, oral narrative:

Su estilo procede no de la lengua escrita, sino de la comunicación oral, que reclama su auditorio, que busca la comprensión y el agrado de los circundantes. Es un estilo de gran sencillez que toma sus virtudes de la charla sabrosa con que, en los largos ocios de provincia, se comentan vidas ajenas y se relatan sucesos propios. Tiene la fluidez de lo conversable con la inclinación hacia el rasgo sintético e impresionista que más que definir, sugiere. (Antonio Castro Leal, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, II, p. 48)<sup>36</sup>

Romero's work also has other values. Although he wrote from a



regional and autobiographical point of view, his concerns were always those of the humanist, as is evident in his caustic denunciation of his own position as legal clerk:

Pobres indios, incautos, que entregaban su hijuela a cambio de unos cuantos pesos para gastarlos en la mayordomía de alguna imagen; albaceas sin conciencia, arruinando menores; viudas, engatusadas por los frailes, que cambiaban sus casas por responsos, e imponiendo también mi contribución a la insensatez y al error. Mil veces la miseria a estas indecencias de las que un notario daba fe y yo testicaba, a cincuenta centavos la firma. (Apuntes de un lugareño, p. 82)

At the same time, Romero possessed the sensibility of a poet and often demonstrated it in his descriptions of nature and individuals:

Entretanto, la luz entonaba su sinfonía de colores: primero el blanco de las nubes, tenue jabonadura para que el sol se rasurase; después el rojo de los holanes deshilachados del poniente y el verde amarillo de los cerros que parecían casullas de los domingos de Cuaresma, o capas pluviales ornamentadas con el oro que la Iglesia niega a los pobres. (Mi caballo, mi perro y mi rifle, p. 131)

According to F. R. Morton, "Entre todos los novelistas de la Revolución, es Romero, tal vez, quien ha logrado un estilístico genuinamente original y perfectamente mexicano. Es uno de los pocos poetas que no han dejado de escribir poesía al emprender la novela" (Los novelistas de la Revolución, p. 80). It is unthinkable to suggest that Romero wrote like a reporter. Stylistically and thematically, his novels are too personal and poetic in tone, with a quality of humour and sensibility that discredit such a notion. It is with ample reason that Berta Gamboa de Camino stated: "His realism is not that of a





journalist relating the horrors of life in the camps, but that of a humorist describing the life and bourgeois types in a village" (Renascent Mexico, p. 270).<sup>37</sup>

If we make a critical survey of the major stylistic factors in the works of the principal novelists of the Revolution, we can appreciate clearly that their style of writing did not derive from journalism. Azuela, Guzmán and Romero all manifested a conscious awareness of artistic techniques and literary objectives in the formulation of works of creative merit. A common characteristic of their style was the frequent use of direct and episodic narration. However, the technique did not represent an approximation to journalistic documentation, but, rather, the adoption of the style best suited to the effective presentation of their material. The novelists did not wish to record the day to day developments of factual history, but to present a relevant analysis of the social and political events that were reshaping the life and history of Mexico. In doing so, each novelist reflected a distinct perspective on the fighting and its consequences, and adapted the devices and personal style that would most aptly express his focus on the Revolution.

The multiplicity of thematic and stylistic possibilities demonstrated by the major novelists of the Revolution is only a minor indication of the fundamental diversity existing within the novels of the Revolution as a whole. The variety of materials and forms produced a corresponding divergence of opinions among critics who attempted to establish an orderly and



precise definition of the genre. The inconsistencies inherent in the novels of the Revolution themselves inevitably complicate the task of assessing their relationship to journalism. In order to arrive at any conclusions in this respect it is essential to relate the diversity of form, technique and style to some constant element or theme characteristic of both genres, to a factor that can serve as a touchstone against which to evaluate the relationship between the two forms.

In this regard, one of the most readily accessible factors is history, which not only constitutes the essence of newspaper content, but is also an intrinsic component of every novel of the Revolution, a circumstance which provides an immediate correlation between the two genres. However, whereas history, as an ingredient of journalism, is limited to the role of factual documentation, it plays a much more versatile function within the novels, where it may form the prime focus of the novelist, be the instigating force in the development of the action, provide the circumstantial reality against which to portray the actions of a Revolutionary leader, or merely serve as a background element in the formulation of popular entertainment. The degree to which factual recording of events, whether as history or journalism, affects the style and format of a novel and its reflection of reality depends, to a great extent, on the interplay between the novelist's creative imagination and the events he wishes to portray, and on his ability to incorporate the direct narration of these facts as an artistic component of his work. In the following pages, we will examine the nature and





extent of this interplay, as the basis for evaluating the degree to which journalism and history may have influenced the novelist in the development and artistic conception of his compositions.

The scope of novels of the Revolution range from artistically conceived and technically well-executed works of literature to direct, documentary narrations of events witnessed and recorded. Notwithstanding this fact, nearly all novelists of the Revolution were, to some degree, aware of the fundamental prerequisites of literary composition and the conditions that they imposed on narrative structure. Naturally, novelists who adhered to certain literary principles, even when personally committed to political and social ideas, as a rule composed works with greater artistic merit; those committed to ideological causes or to documentation of specific aspects of the Revolution were generally less successful. The role of history in any of these works varied according to the importance the novelist gave it and its interaction with the more literary elements of his novel.

A number of novelists of the Revolution were mostly interested in history 'per se'. Their style and structure inevitably supported this demand, and supplanted the more artistic and literary elements fostered by the principal novelists such as Azuela and Guzmán. Manuel W. González, Con Carranza (1933) and Contra Villa (1935), is among those who adhered most closely to the intent of the historian. In his preface to Contra Villa, he declared that his narratives were "históricas, más históricas quizá que muchas de las que narran



heroicidades sorprendentes y hechos brutales y sangrientos casi siempre más imaginados que verídicos" (p. 7). To corroborate his claims to historical veracity, González cited details of dates, places, and military manoeuvres in the 'Constitucionalista' struggle, included quotations from correspondence, manifestos, official communiqués and historical documents, and chronicled the activities of specific individuals during the period. However, unlike the conscientious historian, González refused to make critical analyses: "...yo no soy más que un narrador y renuncio a meterme [en honduras en mis relatos]" (Con Carranza, I, p. 117). He also refused to consider himself the definitive historian of this era, choosing rather to record "[para que] gufe en algo los pasos de los verdaderos historiadores del futuro" (Con Carranza, II, p. 206).<sup>38</sup> His role as an historian was further moderated by his own inclination to add personal commentary and anecdotes that allowed him to play the part of a 'raconteur'. With respect to the relationship between his novels of the Revolution and journalism, it is evident that the episodic, documental, succinct and anecdotal style of Con Carranza and Contre Villa is not the result of the influence of journalism but rather of their author's intention to give an accurate, historical account of the Revolution.

Other novelists reveal a comparable attention to historical detail, but not all profess the same intent as González. Diego Arenas Guzmán, for example, in La consumación del crimen (1935), documented various aspects of Mexican history, but used a style strongly reminiscent of investigative





journalism. This is clearly illustrated in his chronicle of the events leading up to the assassination of Madero and Pino Suárez.

Entre diez y media y once de la noche del 22 del febrero fueron sacados de la Intendencia del Palacio Nacional, donde se hallaban prisioneros, los señores Francisco I. Madero y José Pino Suárez.

Al primero se le hizo abordar un automóvil marca "Protos", cerrado, tipo Landaulet, de cuatro cilindros, que piloteaba el chofer Ricardo Romero.

Este automóvil era de propiedad particular del señor Alberto Murphy, y fue prestado por su dueño en la tarde del mismo 22 de febrero al señor Cecilio Ocón, quien, según declaraciones del chofer Romero, no contradichas hasta ahora, estuvo de cinco y media a siete de la noche, más o menos, en el Palacio Nacional, de allí se dirigió a la casa que en la calle de las Artes habitaba el general Félix Díaz, en seguida, a la Secretaría de Guerra, luego nuevamente a la casa del general Díaz y por segunda y última vez al Palacio Nacional. (p. 11)

Moreover, Arenas Guzmán made personal evaluation and grandiloquent declamation part of his text, much in the style of the partisan press, as is evident from his remark on the death of Madero:

Pero el ronquido siniestro del arma homicida fué como reclamo de bestia de celo que repercutió por todos los ámbitos del país despertando a los monstruos adormilados de la guerra civil, de la revolución preñada de bárbaras represalias, de bajos instintos y de terribles odios; pero también de grandezas, de abnegaciones, de heroísmos, de esperanzas en un porvenir de superación nacional. (p. 15)

Arenas Guzmán's use of a journalistic style is to be explained by the fact that he based his work on newspaper reports filed with the national daily, *El Universal*, between 1932 and 1933. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that his



style is episodic and fragmented, designed to offer historical information and record specific events of the Revolution. While Arenas Guzmán never attempted to establish a clearly novelistic form by narrating a causal sequence of events progressing to a climax, he did, however, mitigate the purely journalistic effects of his work by incorporating elements of creative technique, such as a refined and poetic language and grandiloquent tone, which are perhaps more appropriate to fiction than the newspaper, and by indicating his intention, as an archivist, to record and re-create History. To this end, Arenas Guzmán tried to establish the chronology of the Revolution, and to analyse its causes, effects and shortcomings critically.<sup>39</sup>

Some novelists sought to portray specific episodes of history by making use of the formal structure of a novel. The degree of their success varied greatly, although few were as inept as José Asunción Reyes in the composition of El automóvil gris (1922). In this work, the novelist intended to chronicle the activities of a band of burglars who, with the apparent collusion of eminent political and military authorities, terrorized Mexico City between 1914 and 1916. However, he dealt with such an obscure facet of Revolutionary Mexico that he was unable to provide a pertinent synthesis of the social and political life of the time. His creative endeavours were equally abortive, for his narrative, which recounts the tribulations of his protagonist, Modesta Díaz, is not properly integrated into the historical events which form its background. As a





consequence, there are two distinct plot lines, developed independently of each other and only peripherally interconnected. In such a novel, the reader must be fully aware of the historical circumstances concerning the burglars (known by their trademark as the "Banda del automóvil gris"), for if not, it is impossible either to understand the novel fully or to appreciate its very limited value. Reyes' main difficulty stems from the fact that he is unable to reconcile the elements of creative literature with those of history. The historical events he portrays are so minor that they have no real merit or meaning in themselves. Yet, they predominate throughout his work to the detriment of artistic elements, and deprive the novel of its relative worth both as history and as literature.

The commitment to record specific aspects of the Revolution was not common to all novelists. Others preferred to use history as the background against which to narrate entertaining and sentimental stories. In this case, novelists subordinated the narration of the events of history to the narration of fiction and concentrated more specifically on providing the reader with light entertainment, usually in the form of unwonted adventures, amorous entanglements and dramatic complications. Historical accuracy was of secondary importance since the expression of the author's creative imagination counted for greatest effect. Such novels, designed to provide maximum entertainment value, customarily exploited the Revolution only as an aspect of historical background, and avoided any indication of political and social compromise in the



new order.

Miguel Arce's Sólo tú (1928) is one of the most outstanding novels of this tendency. Although its plot unfolds against the background of the 'maderista' Revolution, it does not focus on the decisive social changes in Mexico, but on the experiences of the young idealist, Federico Galicia, who endures a series of heroic endeavours, romantic complications and personal tragedies that bring him to a realistic awareness of life. The title, Sólo tú, is a good indication of the tone and nature of the work. The protagonist, a sensitive, idealistic poet, searches for a suitable title to his newly composed waltz, altering the name to coincide with each new crisis he experiences. First, he calls it "Anáhuac" in homage to Mexico through his sense of dedication as a patriot, but when he falls in love with Asunción, he renames it in her honour. When he loses her love to a treacherous friend, Federico changes the title to "Paz", in commemoration of Madero's election as President. Finally, when he has lost both Asunción, who renounces his love for social reasons, and his father, who dies a victim of the political struggle, Federico dedicates the waltz to the only person who remains to him, his mother, inscribing it "Sólo tú". Under this title the waltz promptly becomes very famous, and the protagonist lives contentedly with his devoted mother.

In the novels of Esteban Maqueo Castellanos and Martín Luis Guzmán, history is again used as a relevant and well-integrated device of prose narrative. However, both these





novelists give historical reality a greater prominence than it has in Miguel Arce's Sólo tú because they do not avoid discussion of social themes. Esteban Maqueo Castellanos' La casona en ruinas (written in 1917 and published in 1921) is more than an entertaining, fictionalized account of life in Mexico City during the politically critical period from 1910 to 1915. The work has a truly novelistic form, but depicts the armed conflict and ideological struggle realistically. Actual historical events are integrated into the plot of the novel for two purposes: as a means of portraying the contemporary reality and the historical progress of the 'maderista' struggle; and also to underline the novelist's predominant social themes. Hence, La casona en ruinas is, on one level, an account of the life and fortunes of the inhabitants of a large rooming house in the City of Mexico; and, on another, an extended, symbolic summary of the meaning of the Revolution, and of the hope for national reconciliation and reconstruction. The rooming house represents Mexico, and the four students who share one of its apartments portray different participants in the Revolution (the idealist, the opportunist, the pragmatist). The succession of events of the conflict is synthesized in the lives of these characters and in the slow destruction of the rooming house, and when the house is finally destroyed ('la ruina de la casona') its ruin is a symbol of the state of Mexico:

¡Cuánto horror no había pasado por la casona!  
 ¡Cuánto duelo y cuánta vejación, cuánta angustia  
 y cuánto ultraje, cuánta miseria y cuánta falsía,  
 cuánto crimen y cuánta heroicidad, cuánta  
 abnegación y cuánto cinicismo, cuánto brutal



instinto insaciado y cuánto sacrificio, cuánta risa frenética, cuánta blasfemia y cuánta oración, cuánta bondad y cuánto aprobio!... ¿Y todo para qué? Para que insulsas codicias sólo hubieran conseguido desterrar de ella la paz y el trabajo, la sana fraternidad, la alegría, todo, hasta concluir por arrimar la tea incendiaria de manos matricidas, y la ambición sirviendo de combustible hubiera reducido la casona a la pavorosa ruina de ahora!...

¿Cuándo se podría reedificar? ¿Quién acometería la colosal empresa? ¿Con qué manos se haría?... (pp. 658-659)

The two narrative levels are carefully interwoven, harmoniously complementing each other in a complete and well-balanced portrayal of the Revolution. Although Maqueo Castellanos considered his novel a "mal pergeñada relación, con ínfulas de novela", the work is justly important, not only for the artistic quality of its composition and the appropriateness of its theme, but because Maqueo Castellanos was one of the first to approach the theme of the Revolution without neglecting the traditional characteristics and techniques of narrative composition.<sup>40</sup>

In a vein similar to that exploited by Maqueo Castellanos, Martín Luis Guzmán also took his inspiration for La sombra del caudillo (1929) from history. In his case, he made use of the Presidential election of 1927, with the purpose of demonstrating how injustice and political treachery were inherent characteristics of the national political arena. Despite the factual relevance of their material, both novelists placed the historical events within an artistic form, and gave their accounts significant literary merit. Moreover, the value of their novels, unlike those of other writers of the period, does





not demand an understanding of the historical events narrated in order for the reader to grasp the full significance of their work. The novels, as a synthesis of universal concerns and human perceptions, function as independent, artistic creations.

In spite of the ostensible importance of history in the conception of any novel of the Revolution, it is evident that novelists could still produce works of literary merit, even based on factual events. It was also possible to create works of outstanding literary worth without portraying any one specific development in the Revolution, but by focusing on the significance of the struggle in more abstract terms and presenting an interpretation of events based on artistic forms alone. Among the most outstanding of such novels is Mauricio Magdaleno's El resplandor (1937), an eminently literary account of the effects of the Revolution on the indigenous population. F. R. Morton was enthusiastic in his praise:

En El resplandor el arte del novelista llega a su máxima altura y produce un libro difícil de rival en la literatura mexicana. Por su delineación de los personajes, por su contenido hondamente conmovedor y verdadero, y por su concepción artística, la novela puede considerarse como una de las mejores de México. Aquí sí, la palabra 'novela' está tomada bajo las reglas literarias que definen al género. Considerada en este aspecto, el de la forma arbitraria literaria, queda como la mejor novela de la Revolución. (Los novelistas de la Revolución, p. 212)

The central theme of the novel deals with the exploitation and inequities suffered by the Indians since the Conquest. Yet Magdaleno does not sermonize. Through flashbacks and the collective memory of the Indians he conveys a clear idea of



their tragic history, but leaves the reader to reach his own conclusion. His language is consistently careful and his tone, even when he expresses his fundamental, social concerns, is controlled and precise:

En el remoto ayer las hordas sintieron el peso aplastante de la cruel explotación del blanco, y desde entonces, a través de tantos años como los luceros de las noches de San Andrés, no ignoraron que es inútil rebelarse. Ojos que han agotado el llanto, voces confidenciales y mustias, indiferencia que es como la ceniza que cubre un leño hecho ascuas. La vida se anuncia en el vientre de las mujeres sin un espasmo de tortura y la muerte es un incidente que sorprende a los jóvenes y a los viejos sin malograr una faena o interrumpir un caudaloso acceso de energía. La energía, en la tierra del otomí, se concentra en longevidad y en monstruoso mimetismo con el minero y el cacto. Cincuenta, cien años, son nada, un minuto en la existencia del páramo. Donde nunca floreció la esperanza de algo tampoco tiene razón de ser la medida de nada. (El resplandor, p. 866)

The final product is a deftly structured novel that combines social criticism, Revolutionary themes and literary techniques in the creation of an entertaining, well-balanced and artistic narrative.

Mauricio Magdaleno and Martín Luis Guzmán, whose works rank among the better novels of the Revolution, exemplify exactly the manner in which historical reality could be artistically incorporated into literary compositions. The fact that novelists depicted verifiable events and specific circumstances did not necessarily mean that they conformed to historical or even journalistic conventions, nor that the literary merit of their works was attenuated by their perception and recreation of reality. However, as we have seen, the





interaction of history and literature played a fundamental role in the composition of novels of the Revolution. When the novelists attempted to focus too closely on history and to document specific events, their style frequently approximated that of the historian and even of the journalist. However, the novels of the Revolution which have been discussed thus far are only a fraction of the total belonging to the genre. The greater majority of these remaining compositions conform to a traditional narrative structure, in which the experiences of a central characters are recounted chronologically in order to build towards a climax in the plot and the interest of the reader. Nonetheless, if we are to present a true assessment of the relationship between the novel of the Revolution and journalism we must examine two of the other principal forms used by novelists of the genre, namely, autobiographical accounts, and collections of semi-independent stories.

Like the other writers of the Revolution, the autobiographical novelists exploited a diversity of thematic and stylistic possibilities, ranging from direct documentation to lyrical recollection of their experiences in the fighting. One of the most notably documentary of such works is Fernando Ramírez de Aguilar's Desde el tren amarillo (1924), a work written in a straightforward, objective style, and drawn largely from the novelist's experience as a war correspondent aboard the Presidential train in the military campaigns of 1923-1924. As a result, his tone is often reminiscent of newspaper reporting:



## SERA ATACADO TEHUACAN

Esta tarde momentos antes de salir de esta ciudad, partió el General Almazán, con tropas suficientes rumbo al sur. Según parece su objetivo es Tehuacán. El General Martínez, quien regresó temprano de México, estuvo conferenciando activamente con todos sus generales, sobre operaciones futuras.

Tropas de Caballería rebelde en número de ochenta se rindieron hoy viniendo procedentes del Sur. Se estima que ese grupo no pudo pasar y temerosos de caer en poder de las caballerías del General Gutiérrez optaron por presentarse.  
(p. 39)

This style is due in no small part to the fact that the accounts comprising Desde el tren amarillo were originally published in El Universal as a correspondent's reports. As a result, Ramírez de Aguilar, unlike most other novelists of the Revolution, recounted his experiences and recollections contemporaneously with the events witnessed, and so lacked the evaluative tone common to the memoirs of most writers, who, as a result of their distance in time from the revolutionary war, presented a more abstract and detached re-creation of the period. Nonetheless, Ramírez de Aguilar mitigated the purely journalistic quality of his work by stressing the importance of history and confessing to the desire that his chronicles "[figuren] en las notas bibliográficas de las obras de los señores que HACEN la historia" (p. 9). A typical example of historical detail appears in his description of the capture of Puebla:

El frente de combate de las tropas atacantes se extendió entre Cholula y las Animas, habiendo entrado en acción por lo menos seis mil soldados incluyendo los servicios. El general Martínez no tuvo necesidad de usar de sus reservas que permanecieron sobre las armas en la retaguardia, hacia el lado de Panzacola....

La artillería ocupó posiciones y abrió el





fuego sobre San Juan a las siete y quince de la mañana, fuego intermitente, que prepara el avance de las infanterías. Tropas defensoras...ocupaban posiciones sobre los bordos del camino, en la falda de los cerros y éstas fueron las que iniciaron el fuego de las infanterías, que durante cuarenta y cinco minutos fué intermitente. A las ocho de la mañana se generalizó el fuego en todo el frente, y los cornetas comenzaron a tocar "infantería de frente". (p. 35)

The documentary quality of his work is further tempered through his occasional use of anecdotal asides, digressive commentary and grandiloquent, lyrical language.

Unlike Ramírez de Aguilar, most writers of memoirs, while they might narrate events simply and directly, fostered a more lyric and evaluative quality in their work. Nellie Campobello was one who adopted a simple, clear narrative style.

El estilo de Nellie Campobello llega hasta parecer estilo sin estilo. Las frases contienen una falta absoluta de 'literatismo'. Son como esqueletos sin ninguna ornamentación. Se leen, se tienen que leer, como si fueran lenguaje hablado y, si uno se fija sólo en la puntuación, se encontrará extraviado. Son, sobre todo, frases claras y directas. No sólo en su contenido ideológico sino en su forma son sumamente sencillas. Por su brevedad, su manera objetiva y hasta brutal impresionan al lector. (F. R. Morton, Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 164)

Her succinct narration and episodic plot seem to characterize F. R. Morton's concept of the 'journalistic' style used by novelists of the Revolution. In the case of Campobello, however, it is more likely that her style was a personal one, adapted from the material she had begun to sketch when only ten years old. It is improbable that, at that age, she would have



attempted to imitate the mode of informative journalism. In effect, neither Cartucho (1931) nor Las manos de Mamá (1937) can be classified as newspaper reportage. Both novels are a series of lyrical and sensitive recollections of Campobello's youth, narrated with the simplicity and lack of artifice of a child. The opening paragraphs of Cartucho constitute an excellent example:

Cartucho no dijo su nombre. No sabía coser ni pegar botones. Un día llevaron sus camisas para la casa. Cartucho fue a dar las gracias. "El dinero hace a veces que las gentes no sepan reír", dije yo jugando debajo de una mesa. Cartucho se quitó un gran sombrero que traía y con los ojos medio cerrados dijo adiós. Cayó simpático, ¡era un cartucho!

Un día cantó algo de amor. Su voz sonaba muy bonito. Le corrieron lágrimas por los cachetes. Dijo que él era un cartucho por causa de una mujer. Jugaba con Glorieta y la paseaba a caballo. Por toda la calle. (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, I, p. 929)

Campobello's works, then, are a further illustration of the fact that the presence of certain 'journalistic' elements in the novel of the Revolution is not absolutely indicative of an intentional correlation between the two genres, but derives rather from chance similarities of narrative techniques.

Other autobiographical novelists elaborated considerably on the simple lyricism of Campobello's presentation of history and wrote their memoirs as accomplished, literary works. One such example is José Vasconcelos' Ulises Criollo (1935). The first volume of his memoirs re-creates the novelist's youth and recollections of the Revolution, and describes events in a grandiloquent, lyrical manner, suitable to the protagonist's





youthful idealism and the early triumph of 'maderismo'. One of Mexico's prominent intellectuals, Vasconcelos developed his account meticulously, enhancing it with a poetic language, exact imagery and erudite references. His description of Madero's triumphal entry into Mexico City is typical of his style:

Las campanas de la Catedral, las de la Profesa, las de noventa templos repicaron el triunfo del Dios bueno. Por una vez, en tanto tiempo, caía destronado Huitzilopochtli, el sanguinario. Tras de la larga condena de todo un siglo de mala historia, una nueva etapa inspirada en el amor cristiano, iniciaba su regocijo, prometía bienandanza. No era ni el cortejo de las tres garantías que aseguró la independencia nacional, ni la entrada de Juárez, que ponía término a una intervención, aunque nos echaba auestas compromisos peores que los del Imperio, y perpetuaba la división de los mexicanos en dos bandos irreconciliables: jacobinos y católicos. Por primera vez, la vieja Anáhuac aclamaba a un héroe cuyo signo de victoria era la libertad, y su propósito no la venganza, sino la unión.  
(p. 272)

The same interplay of history and creative imagination, of direct documentation and re-creation, is evident among the novelists of the Revolution who published works which comprised collections of short, semi-independent narratives. The theme of the Revolution, or one aspect of it, provided a loose, internal source of unity for these works, but specific styles and techniques varied according to the authors' objectives and ability. Celestino Herrera Frimont's *La línea del fuego* (1930) shows indications of journalistic influence in its narrative tone, rapid, succinct description, the direct, simple style of writing, the lack of extraneous details, and the tendency to reduce the individuality of the characters to a minimum, even to



anonymity. These prose characteristics are to be attributed, in part, to the fact that a large number of his narratives appeared in El Universal Ilustrado in 1929 and 1930. However, journalism is not the only possible influence, for Herrera Frimont also cultivates literary techniques. He is particularly adept in his mastery of language, in his effective use of a creative imagination in telling engaging stories, in the portrayal of the Revolution through symbols, and in the development of a doctrine expounding human worth. As a consequence, La línea del fuego is enhanced by a degree of artistic merit not found in daily journalism.

Other novelists in this group generally followed Herrera Frimont's lead, aware of the need for a certain level of artistic creativity, yet still intent on examining the historical phenomena of the Revolution. Such was Eduardo Luquín's intention in Tumulto (1937):

...soy amigo...de todo aquello, en suma, que afirma al hombre en el sitio que le corresponde.

Las páginas que aparecen a continuación fueron escritas por razones de publicidad. Me esforcé por construir relatos que, sin perder el nexo que los une, pudiesen explicarse por sí mismos, bastarse solos y existir independientemente. Hay en dos o tres de las narraciones, mucho de imaginación, pero todas se apoyan en la realidad y justifican, a mi juicio, el título de este libro. ("Advertencia", p. 4)

Luquín's style is best illustrated in his description of the death of Carranza. Here, as is typical for this group of writers, history is presented as the distillation of the novelist's personal perspective, and is recounted in an artistic (or artificial) manner: "Bajo un cielo de estrellas, nubes





fantásticas se agitaban con movimientos dislocados. Se hubiese creído que partidario de la causa carrancista, el cielo se convertía de pronto en espejo y portavoz de las intenciones que alentaban en los pechos de los soldados infidentes, para advertir al jefe el peligro que amenazaba en todas partes" (p. 92).

Some of the writers who produced works composed of several short narrations placed greater emphasis on literary techniques than either Herrera Frimont or Luquín, but still the underlying historical reality of the Revolution constituted a major factor in their creative process. Robleto effectively summarized this dual quality in his introduction to La mascota de Pancho Villa: "Podría considerarse como fantasía la narración de los episodios que se relacionaron con el guerrillero del Norte; pero nada de eso hay en las líneas que más bien son biográficas o, si se quiere, rodeadas de un estilo que se acerca a la fantasía; pero que no es tal" (p. 7). As a novel La mascota de Pancho Villa does not qualify as great literature. However, it is an interesting work, as much for its capacity to entertain as for Robleto's ability to create light, literary pieces from historical data.

The multiplicity of forms employed by the novelists of the Revolution, coupled with the diversity of themes and style, severely limited the development of the novel of the Revolution as a truly homogeneous form. Moreover, the novelists of the



Revolution, unlike the 'colonialista' or 'modernista' writers, did not share a common, aesthetic doctrine, but wrote according to personal criteria and individual literary concepts. The influence of journalism on the styles and forms of these novelists was, as we have seen, of a limited and arbitrary nature, and affected only a few writers. The diversity of form is especially noticeable in matters of language, as can be demonstrated through a comparison among four novels of the Revolution, all based on a common theme but exhibiting notable differences with regard to literary techniques and the description of a particular historical reality. These novels are: El águila y la serpiente (1928), by Martín Luis Guzmán, Hernán Robleto's La mascota de Pancho Villa (1934), Manuel W. González's Contra Villa (1935) and Yámonos con Pancho Villa (1931), by Rafael R. Muñoz.

As we have already noted in our earlier comments El águila y la serpiente contains Guzmán's recollections of his experiences from 1913 to 1915 as an intellectual committed to the Villista cause. His prose reflects the advantages of his formal literary training, with a style of writing that is refined and controlled, appropriate to the novelist's artistic portrayal of the conflict. These characteristics prevail even in scenes which depict historical events, such as Guzmán's first encounter with Villa:

Nosotros, pobres ilusos--porque sólo ilusos éramos entonces--, habíamos llegado hasta ese sitio cargados con la endeble experiencia de nuestros libros y nuestros primeros arranques. Y ¿a qué llegábamos? A que nos cogiera de lleno y





por sorpresa la tragedia del bien y del mal, que no saben de transacciones: que puros, sin mezclarse uno y otro, deben vencer o resignarse a ser vencidos. Veníamos huyendo de Victoriano Huerta, el traidor, el asesino, e íbamos por la misma dinámica de la vida y por cuanto en ella hay de más generoso, a caer en Pancho Villa, cuya alma, más que de hombre, era de jaguar, de jaguar en esos momentos domesticado para nuestra obra o para lo que creíamos era nuestra obra: jaguar a quien, acariciadores, pasábamos la mano sobre el lomo, temblando de que nos tirara un zarpezo. (El águila y la serpiente in La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, I, p. 231)

Guzmán's language is outstanding for its vitality and purity, and for its capacity to reflect the psychological motivations of the revolutionaries. While often reminiscent of the easy narration of the accomplished 'raconteur', the prose is also infused with the lyric quality of the poet:

Era un día claro--con esa claridad de México sólo, que acerca las montañas y convierte el aire en transparencia pura: se dilataba la vista hasta lejanos confines que parecían, dentro del cristal de la atmósfera, estar a un paso. El tren corría sin incidentes y bañado en luz. De cuando en cuando nos precipitábamos--a eso se acostumbraban pronto los nervios--en el abismo del algún 'shoe fly'. Entonces se balanceaba la locomotora, se torcían los furgones, crujían los coches y reíamos excitados los viajeros hasta que a poco tornábamos a respirar. (El águila y la serpiente, in La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, I, p. 247)

Such language is that of a writer fully conscious of his craft as a literary artist wherein language, style and form all combine as integral components of the creative process.

Hernán Robleto displayed a different ability in La mascota de Pancho Villa, a work that examines historical aspects of the 'caudillo's' experiences, and the myths grown up around him. Robleto portrays this double perspective through a



counterbalance of reality and fantasy, recounting actual facts of Villa's personality and life, and juxtaposing them with legends and anecdotes that have given him mythical stature in the collective imagination. Although the Revolution constitutes the basic background of the work, Robleto always imparts a greater significance to human circumstances than to political and military events, emphasizing the emotions and psychology of the individuals. The work, composed of nineteen short stories, is recounted in a direct, succinct prose designed to promote action, heighten suspense and cultivate a simple, entertaining plot line. In general, Robleto's language reflects literary design, without historical or journalistic compromise. Often, his narration seems to derive from an oral tradition, with a certain stress on the desire to recount a compelling, pleasing story, a facet that is complemented in the choice of situations and characters to provoke popular responses, and in the use of an unexpected or ironic twist to provide a surprise ending. The first narrative, from which the book derives its title, recounts the story of Villa's mascot, Pascual, a deaf-mute for whom he holds a superstitious deference. Supposedly an orphan, and suffering from starvation after Villa's defeat at Celaya, Pascual knocks at the door of a house in search of charity.

El pequeño monstruo quiso desdoblarse,  
salirse de su joroba, levantando el pescuezo a lo  
alto, hacia la cabeza del hombre que aparecía.  
Había alzado los brazos, en brusco ademán de  
naufragio, y el esfuerzo sobrenatural rompió los  
hilos de la condena que lo ataban al mutismo.

El sordomudo gimió:

--¡Papá! ¡Papá! Soy yo... ¡Pascual! ¡Tu





hijo!

Se oyó a sí mismo y le pareció que volvía de una sepultura. (2nd ed., p. 17)

This ending is typical of Robleto's style, as is his use of language in the recounting of a story pleasantly told.

Manuel González's main objective in Contra Villa was to chronicle the progress of the 'Constitucionalista' cause from September, 1914 to August, 1915. Linguistically, the work's style and tone borrow heavily from historical narration, with the documentation of factual events and the use of quotations from official communiqués and other historical material.

El General Villa, entre tanto, no se dormía y reforzaba sus contingentes guerreros, pues teníamos noticias ciertas de que miles de Jefes y Oficiales ex-federales de los que habíamos licenciado apenas en agosto, se incorporaban diariamente a las filas del Villismo poniéndose a las órdenes del General Felipe Angeles cuyo prestigio era grande y a quien se consideraba como el principal factor en la División del Norte.

El General González sostuvo varias conferencias con el General Villa y una de ellas cuya copia guardo entre mis papeles...dice así: "Señor General Villa: he sido enterado por el C. Primer Jefe de la Nación de que lo desconoce usted, así como a la primera jefatura, que con derecho y por voluntad de todo el Ejército Constitucionalista asume, obedeciendo al Plan de Guadalupe..." (pp. 21-22)

As a result of the novelist's propensity to narrate, chronologically and minutely, each new detail of the struggle, the language is generally tedious and mundane.

Todavía se recibieron partes del Norte de Coahuila, donde operaba el Gral. Fernando Peraldi, comunicando que el Crol. Ramón Múzquiz había ocupado la plaza de Villa Acuña, y partes de los Grales. Ildefonso V. Vázquez y Vicente Dávila manifestando que avanzaban sobre Monterrey, así como el Gral. Luis Caballero que



desprendía sus efectivos, una parte al mando del Gral. Francisco González, ya restablecido de su herida; otra mandada por el Gral. Caballero, avanzando sobre Linares y Montemorelos, mientras el Gral. López de Lara con sus tropas se acercaba a Estación Cruz, cortando la comunicación de los villistas entre Victoria y Monterrey. (p. 267)

González emphasized the historical character of his work, qualifying his narratives as "históricas, más históricas quizá de [sic] muchas de las que narran heroicidades sorprendentes y hechos brutales y sangrientos..." (p. 7). Indeed, if it were not for occasional anecdotal digressions and personal asides, Contra Villa would be nothing more than an 'official' history of the 'Constitucionalista' movement. This extraneous material provided a refinement in linguistic content that added facets of artistic quality to the work. Similarly, when recording dialogues between revolutionaries, González was capable of capturing the linguistic characteristics of the individual or his region as a means of realistically portraying the Mexican situation. These qualities, however, were of secondary importance, since González never proposed to write novels of artistic or linguistic merit; he was content, as he said, to "seguir hilvanando mis relatos en el idioma del pueblo, sin hueca literatura y sin palabrones, apegándome a la verdad...que yo ví, que yo palpé y que yo viví..." (p. 7).

An analysis of language in Rafael F. Muñoz's Vámonos con Pancho Villa reveals the interaction of three elements: history, journalism and literature. Historical narration is promoted in the accounts of military campaigns and the documentation of actual events in the life of Villa. However, Muñoz did not





accept the limitations imposed by history in order to write a simple, chronological account of the Revolution. There are also elements of journalistic style, especially in the objective, unencumbered recounting of battle scenes, such as his description of the fighting at Ciudad Lerdo, which closely resembles the reportative style of a war correspondent.

Un gran duelo de artillería sostuvieron durante mañana y tarde las baterías del Cerro de la Pila y los villistas colocados al sur de la Estación El Vergel. Los federales habían construido cinco pequeños fortines artillados y largas trincheras protegidas con alambre espinoso en La Pila, que es un cerro de grandes trozos de cantera blanca, con escasa vegetación, que apenas se levanta hasta las rodillas de los hombres. (Vámonos con Pancho Villa, in La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, II, p. 701)

John Brushwood pointed out another similarity between Vámonos con Pancho Villa and journalism, in that parts of the novel resemble the newspaper human interest story.

Vámonos con Pancho Villa...is a fine example of a highly readable account which, on analysis, appears to be artistically defective in every conceivable way. It would be a waste of time to specify the book's faults, which it has in common with many others. The essential question is why it is a good book if it has so many counts against it. One of the reasons is the author's narrative facility. Like many other novelists, he was a practicing journalist, and he carried over into his vignettes of Villa's men the easy, superficial description that characterizes a newspaper human-interest story. (Mexico in Its Novel, pp. 206-207)

Notwithstanding, Muñoz's principal motive was to write a novel: "Los sucesos referidos aquí son ciertos, uno por uno. El autor atribuye todos a un grupo de hombres para hacer una novela de audacia, heroísmo, altivez, sacrificio, crueldad y sangre,



alrededor de la figura imponente de Francisco Villa"

(Preliminary note), and hence he develops the literary and creative elements of his composition. The technique employed by Muñoz to disengage himself from the purely historical approach is to analyse the experiences of one soldier, Tiburcio Maya. The account is then dramatically entertaining, and also permits the novelist to delve into the psychology of the revolutionaries and to examine their motives and loyalties in an abstract manner. In order to entertain his readers Muñoz structured the novel along traditional lines, building towards a climax and maintaining attention through dramatic language and a fast-paced narration. He also exercised a certain amount of creative freedom by re-creating minor historical events to suit his literary intentions and by inventing appropriate dialogue, even in the case of Pancho Villa. Furthermore, the novelist's linguistic ability was not restricted by his tendency to write as an historian or a journalist for he imbued his writing with a certain literary sensibility that is well reflected in his poetic descriptions of Nature. Max Aub summarized the different aspects of Muñoz's linguistic style, declaring, "Fue el más 'reporteril' de todos, pero se engañarían los que creyeran que su literatura estaba hecha para el periódico, llamada a desaparecer con el de la fecha siguiente. Rafael F. Muñoz, como todos los narradores de esta época, relata lo cierto pero lo amalgama con lo que debiera haber sido."<sup>41</sup> Although Vámonos con Pachó Villa was undeniably affected by the novelist's training as a journalist, it is impossible, and unjust, to dismiss the work as mere journalistic





reporting. Interestingly enough, even Muñoz's newspaper articles demonstrated a tendency to combine literary and journalistic elements. Upon Pancho Villa's assassination in 1923, Muñoz was dispatched to Chihuahua as a special correspondent by El Universal Gráfico, and he subsequently published a number of reports, among them "Desde abril se tramaba la muerte de Francisco Villa" (July 26), and "Villa estaba de antemano condenado a la muerte" (July 27). Although Muñoz clearly demonstrated his awareness of the duty of the newspaper to inform (as well as the sensationalist preferences of the public), his articles nevertheless reflected a certain imaginative licence on the part of the writer, who tempered the news with personal impressions and elements of literary style.

From these four novels it is indeed clear that there was no uniformity of style and language in the novels of the Revolution. The unequal quality of the compositions can be attributed to a variety of factors: the uneven literary ability among novelists of the Revolution; the multiplicity of forms in which the subject could be presented; and, the diversity of influences that shaped the final products. Among these influences journalism constitutes only one factor, and is by no means the most influential nor most pervasive. Clearly, it would be inappropriate to categorize all the novels of the Revolution as journalistic.

Thus far, we have examined the relationship between



journalism and the novel of the Revolution from the point of view of style and language, but have not discovered any definite or recurring correlation between the two. In order to complete our study, it is also essential to assess thematic similarities between them, an important consideration since both journalists and novelists of the period we are describing took the Revolution as the subject of their writing. However, in any comparison, there are several factors to bear in mind. Since, between 1910 and 1920, the most active and decisive years of the war, the novel of the Revolution barely existed, it was not able to serve as a vehicle for the description of the Revolution in the same way as daily journalism. In fact, newspapers, the main sources of information during the fighting, provided detailed chronicles of events and fulfilled a role as propaganda for the various political factions. By contrast, the novel of the Revolution was critically unacknowledged until after 1925. Even so, novelists who wrote before this time seldom provided informative documentation on specific events and revolutionaries, while those who wrote after 1925 enjoyed the advantage of being able to make a more objective, conceptual assessment of the Revolutionary crisis and their own experiences in it. The most immediate coincidence, then, between the thematic elements of the novels and those of journalism pertains to the post-Revolutionary era.

The prevalent themes of the newspaper editorials published after 1920 dealt generally with the Revolution and the political and social conditions it had engendered. A standard focus for





such analyses was a comparison between the original intentions of the Revolution, as proclaimed by its principal ideologues, and the contemporary consequences of the fighting and the implementation of their ideals. Accordingly, agrarian reform, redistribution of land, 'caciquismo', 'indigenismo' and the rights of the masses constituted the main concerns of journalism. Combined with them was a preoccupation for the perennial social problems such as crime, public hygiene, alcoholism and education. Generally speaking, the novels written between 1920 and 1940 reflected the same thematic concerns as those expressed in newspaper editorials. This is not to say that there was complete unanimity between the two genres. Frequently, editorials analysed specific historical events or dealt with very mundane topics, in which case their material lacked the basis that would make it suitable as the plot of a novel. It is also important to stress that, although we shall specify basic correlations between the two genres and will assess their relative interaction, it is impossible, within the limits of this study, to undertake an exhaustive comparison of the thematic parallels between the novels of the Revolution and journalism.

One of the most insistent themes among both groups centred on the 'indigenista' question, but novelists approached the problem from quite different perspectives. Some, such as Gregorio López y Fuentes in *El indio* (1935) and Mariano Azuela in *San Gabriel Valdiviasa: comunidad indígena* (1938), focused their work as a committed exposition of the theme and stressed



the need for resolving one of Mexico's fundamental problems. Others integrated the theme as a tangential aspect of a wider plot, an approach developed in such thematically and stylistically divergent works as Miguel Arce's Sólo tú (1928), E. Othón Díaz's S.F.Z. 33 Escuela (1938), and J. M. Puig Casauranc's La hermana impura (1927). Editorialists, too, considered the problem from every angle, as a random sampling of articles in different newspapers might indicate: on May 5, 1915 in El Pueblo, "Los indios"; June 2, 1924, El Demócrata, "El problema indígena y la plataforma de Calles"; December 27, 1926, Excelsior, "El indianismo triunfante"; February 3, 1932, El Gráfico, an untitled editorial on Indians and education; June 15, 1937, El Universal, "Elogio político al indio político", by Mauricio Magdaleno.

In the 1930's, there was also an increasing focus on the working class as a result of the socialist, pro-worker propaganda of the international communist movement. In Mexico, the majority of newspaper editorials endorsed the official Government policy, and advocated political paternalism and government control of the working class. By contrast, novelists committed to the socialist cause, such as José Mancisidor (La ciudad roja, 1932), Francisco Sarquis (Mezclilla, 1933), and Enrique Othón Díaz (S.F.Z. 33 Escuela, 1938) favoured the creation of a truly proletarian state, an attitude which naturally attracted government suppression and earned the antagonism of editorialists, who referred to them as 'bolcheviques' and 'comunistoides'.





Mezclilla is Sarquis' zealous statement of his proletarian sympathies: "Mezclilla, novela proletaria que baja a los 'círculos infernales' que la burguesía pretende ignorar, para decirnos como se incuba en los sectores de explotación la nueva conciencia de las masas" (p. 7). In the novelist's view, the work's social themes take priority over artistic form. Therefore, the novelist's didacticism predominates, and extraneous digressions are arbitrarily interpolated, as, for example, in the diatribe against alcohol, "vicio estúpido que lastima el organismo y degenera la raza. Había que terminar con ella." (p. 272), a comment gratuitously added even though it bears no precise relation to the plot at that point. Gregorio López y Fuentes' Huasteca (1939) suffers from similar shortcomings. Since his exposition of the history of the oil industry and its effects in Mexico was clearly written for ideological purposes, its qualities as a work of literary merit were not of prime concern to the author. His style, as illustrated in his denunciation of foreign domination of Mexico, often resembles that of the newspaper editorialist:

País joven, apenas asomado a los albores de un amanecer, en lo político. En lo económico, prolongación de la Colonia. País propicio a las nuevas conquistas: Colonia de algunos extranjeros, por su riqueza agrícola. Colonia de otros extranjeros, por su minería. Colonia por su sistema ferroviario. Entonces acababa de poner el pie en el país el colonizador petrolero. (p. 55)

This tone also characterizes his denunciations of the betrayal of Revolutionary ideas: "Allá iban--y van todavía--, los aspirantes de los puestos públicos de elección más o menos



popular, a desvirtuar los principios revolucionarios, tomando como instrumento una falsa tendencia social" (p. 268). The resulting effect led John Brushwood to conclude that, "Artistically, Huasteca is an example of the depths to which the novel can sink when it is inspired by propagandistic intent. Many pages of the novel are the exact equivalent of newspaper editorials" (Mexico in Its Novel, p. 221). Othón Díaz's S.F.Z. 33 Escuela is even inferior to Huasteca. From the opening page the novelist lectures on numerous reiterated themes: agrarian reform, re-distribution of land, justice for the Indians, eradication of the pernicious public influence of the Church and bad government, the founding of schools to improve education and the possibility of social redemption for the masses. His declamatory style is epitomized in his evaluation of the teaching profession: "La escuela no es un edificio; es la comunidad entera... El maestro...debe ser, un animador de la colectividad, fuente de alegría y entusiasmo, despertador de la conciencia y de la acción de las masas irredentas... La escuela antes que enseñar a leer...tiene que enseñar a comer, a vestir, a dormir, a descansar; en una palabra, ¡a vivir!... (p. 297). Under the guise of a chronicle of the most outstanding social developments between 1926 and 1936, the author manipulates the entire plot of S.F.Z. 33 Escuela in order to vindicate his own objectives. Events are recounted in a direct, fragmented style, and historical reality is portrayed through a series of brief, critical scenes. Factual descriptions are succinct and direct. By contrast, the novelist's digressions, devoted to his personal





view of society, characteristically exhibit a discursive style and grandiloquent language. Thus Othón Díaz interrupts his narrative whenever he wishes to interpolate personal commentary on the social progress of Mexico, a course which he identifies with the agrarian and nationalist policies of President Cárdenas. Not surprisingly, Adalbert Dessau concluded that the essential stylistic attributes of Othón Díaz's novel were related to journalism:

El conjunto del libro tiene la forma de un sencillo y escueto reportaje, interrumpido frecuentemente por muy vívidos diálogos en el dialecto local. Las partes informativas no tienen grandes pretensiones literarias, y en ellas se aprecia que el autor, tomando en cuenta un principio de selección del contenido, simplemente reproduce lo que ha vivido y presenciado. El resultado de este sencillo procedimiento es que su narración no logra alcanzar gran efecto literario... (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 317)

In spite of this evaluation it would be unfair to classify S.F.Z. 33 Escuela categorically as an offshoot of journalism. Much of Othón Díaz's technique derives from his intention to summarize the principal social developments of a decade of Mexican history, an objective best served by a succinct, episodic style and rapid, direct narration. Such an opinion can be further supported by considering the novel's extended length and the manner in which Othón Díaz conceptualizes his themes. There is a certain correlation between journalism and the novel in the writer's use of an editorialist style to expound upon his social concerns,<sup>42</sup> but, as was often the case in this period, the simple coincidence in their use of themes between



journalists and politically committed novelists is not representative of a case of a novelist borrowing from the pages of the newspaper. It is simply that the same concerns were common to all socially-conscious writers. However, novelists who exaggerated the importance of their particular themes and political compromise often did so to the detriment of their work as a literary product since the urgency to provide pertinent commentary frequently destroyed the continuity of plot and the artistic development of theme. As a result, they frequently wrote tediously didactic thesis works masquerading as novels.

Nevertheless, some novelists were indeed capable of reconciling their personal commitment to society to the demands of literary creation. One of the best writers in this respect was Jorge Ferretis, whose themes focused on humanitarianism, the struggle of the proletariat, and man and his society. The resulting mixture of literature and thesis was exactly what Ferretis intended ("persisto en mi propósito de enjertar novelas con páginas de ensayo", El sur quema, p. 7), and was exactly in accordance with his concern for society ("urdo mis relatos como pretextos para hacer a los linotipos ingerir unos cuantos problemas y fenómenos de nuestra población", El sur quema, p. 7). The persistent focus of Ferretis' works was the betrayal of the ideals of the Revolution, in the hope of inducing Mexicans to remedy national ills: "Y ya sólo quise un libro que muestre lo que no queremos ver; que se va al extranjero (¡y ojalá!) nos turbe y nos cohiba para que más pronto untemos atención a nuestras llagas. Un libro útil a la manera de las vacunas"





(Tierra caliente, 1935, p. 5). In spite of his personal commitments, Ferretis was always careful to analyse his concerns within a structured form that included a careful chronology, development of a climax and suitable artistic techniques, such as evocatory descriptions, a balanced combination of didacticism and entertainment, and a particular use of language in order to create atmosphere and describe characters. The main defects in Ferretis' novel stem from his urgency to express personal concerns, since, whenever he feels a particular statement about society must be expanded upon, he suspends the continuity of his narrative and interpolates digressions.<sup>43</sup>

Teodoro Torres exhibited the same inadequacy in La patria perdida (1935), a novel which attempts to depict the anguish of Mexicans forced by political circumstances to live as exiles in the United States. The plot, clumsily contrived to permit an analysis of post-Revolutionary Mexico and its deficiencies, is constantly encumbered by thematic digressions, often reminiscent of editorial declamations. A typical example is Torres' terse assessment of modern Mexico: "La vida de toda una raza que viene cargando desde muchos siglos con un fardo de violencias, de injusticias, de miserias, de desigualdades, arraigado todo eso sobre ella lo mismo por los suyos que por los extraños" (pp. 85-86).

Based on this editorialist tendency, there is some support for indicating a limited relationship between the novels of the Revolution and journalism. However, the relationship was not evident in all aspects of theme, for just as newspapers



reflected themes and concerns unique to their own genre, so novelists frequently 'editorialized' topics that had no analagous treatment in journalism. In particular, they dwelt on the essence of the human condition, man's existence, and the individual's relationship to society. A further inherent difference between the two was derived from their respective methods of presentation: the editorialists, in accordance with the requirements of journalism, had to write direct, succinct commentary, related to current affairs; novelists, on the other hand, except for extreme cases, sought to formulate their concerns from a more abstract point of view and according to the precepts of fiction.

The parallel between the novelists of the Revolution and journalism, based on their common use of the editorial, recalls somewhat a similar correlation that existed in the 'Porfirista' era. However, contrary to the post-Revolutionary years, when a few novelists assimilated something of the evaluative, declamatory style of the newspaper, it was journalism in the 'Porfirista' era that had been imbued with the essence of literature. There was also a further important point of contact between the two genres in both periods, in that novelists made use of journalism itself, especially newspaper quotations, as a component of their works. 'Porfirista' novelists incorporated real or imagined extracts from newspapers as part of their narrative technique as a means of giving a sense of reality to the developments of a plot, of providing extra information, or serving as a contrast to some element in the narrative. A





similar practice is found in novels of the Revolution, in such diverse works as Esteban Maqueo Castellanos' La ruina de la casona (1921), José Miguel Puig Casauranc's La hermana impura (1927), Miguel Arce's Sólo tú (1928), Rafael F. Muñoz's Se llevaron el cañón para Bachimba (1934) and Teodoro Torres' La patria perdida (1935). Two novels in particular, Martín Luis Guzmán's La sombra del caudillo (1929) and José Asunción Reyes' El automóvil gris (1922), through their exploitation of actual newspaper reports typify the merits, shortcomings and narrative possibilities of the technique.

Guzmán's La sombra del caudillo is an interesting example of historical reality skillfully disguised as entertaining literature. Although the basis for the work was the Presidential campaign of 1927, an event fully recorded in the newspapers of the period, the impact of the plot is not restricted by these circumstances; even a reader, unfamiliar with Mexican history, can sense the intensity of the novelist's criticism of repressive government and appreciate the tragic consequence of the death of the protagonist, General Aguirre (the pseudonym that disguises the personality of the historical figure General Francisco R. Serrano). Towards the end of the novel, Guzmán interpolates a series of newspaper quotes, taken from a fictitious daily, El Gran Diario, as a device to provide pertinent details of General Aguirre's uprising, its suppression and his final capture and execution. A comparison of the actual newspaper passages that chronicled the events of October 1927, especially those of El Universal, "El Gran Diario de México" and



Excélsior, with the quotes included in La sombra del caudillo reveals that Guzmán virtually copied the passages verbatim (see Appendix D). Guzmán had several reasons for using the technique. It provided the reader with extra, important information and, also, illustrated the treachery and hypocrisy of the federal government, which had concocted the stories against Aguirre/Serrano. This criticism of the Government is further enhanced by the interpolation of extraneous newspaper quotes, freely fabricated by Guzmán. Nevertheless, the novelist's use of journalism as a means of corroborating his themes does not detract from his intentions as a novelist. He maintains the artistic merit of the language and literary form of his novel and ensures that the technique does not disrupt his narrative. His overall style is never that of an informative reporter.

José Asunción Reyes, like Guzmán, was inspired by factual events in the composition of El automóvil gris, but his novel, unlike La sombra del caudillo, demonstrates all the worst defects likely to result from the ineffective use of the device and is more reminiscent of investigative journalism than of literature or history. The work is a novelized account of the activities of the group of audacious thieves who operated in the city of Mexico between 1914 and 1916 and used a distinctive grey car to escape from the scene of the crime. The narrative, in fact, has two points of focus. In part, it deals with the tribulations of Modesta Díaz who, in accordance with the novelist's didactic intention, personifies the consequences of a sinful life: "va a servir de ejemplo para doncellas presuntuosas





y para las solteronas que pretenden tener relaciones íntimas con hombres que no pueden ser sus esposos. Si algún bien se hace presentando el ejemplo de Modesta, sea para bien de su alma..." (p. 214). In part, the narrative recounts the crimes of the thieves, for whom Modesta was an inadvertent accomplice, and ends with the final resolution of the case some five years after the crimes were committed. The development of both plots is ineptly contrived using literary, historical and journalistic styles. Asunción Reyes attempted to encompass the story within a basically literary format, including a circular narrative, a leit-motiv of effects arising from the discrepancy between appearances and reality, the combination of two plots for the sake of contrast, and a long, sentimental and moralizing dénouement in which everything is explained and all the threads of the plot are neatly resolved. As an historian, Reyes described prominent events of the period as background, in particular the establishment of the 'Constitucionalista' government and the progress of General Pershing's Punitive Expedition into northern Mexico. His journalistic style is most prevalent when he records the criminal adventures of the gang, especially the subsequent legal proceedings and personal vendettas. Much of this style results from Modesta's practice of completing the narrative through recourse to excerpts from the newspapers, the result, as she explains, of the fact that she preserved "cuidadosamente todos los periódicos que trataban del asunto y gracias a ellos [podía] reproducir aquí muchos párrafos acerca de ese escándalo" (p. 176). Reyes reinforces the effect



by using an informative, journalistic style whenever he complements Modesta's chronicle with extra details of his own. However, the newspaper style is not a fully integrated aspect of Reyes' composition since it hampers the natural progression of the plot and detracts from the already limited artistic merit of the novel. Moreover, if we compare Reyes interpolations with actual newspaper quotes, it is readily evident that even here he failed as a conscientious writer due to the many inaccuracies of his information and dates (see Appendix E).

Guzmán and Reyes probably represent the best and the worst in the practice of incorporating extracts from the newspapers into a novel. There were, however, many other writers who used the technique, with varying success and for a variety of reasons. Numerous writers of military memoirs found that newspapers were the most reliable source of information for both national and local events. This aspect is aptly illustrated in R. F. Muñoz's Se llevaron el cañón para Bachimba.

Esa tarde nos llegó un paquete de periódicos de la ciudad de México; tenían algunas fechas muy atrasadas, porque la línea directa del ferrocarril estaba rota desde muchas semanas antes y la correspondencia daba un gran rodeo por el sur de los Estados Unidos.

--Búscate lo que digan de la Revolución, Alvarito.

--Emiliano Zapata ataca Cuernavaca

--Otra cosa.

--El New York Herald dice que el Presidente de los Estados Unidos, mister William H. Taft, intervendrá prudentemente para hacer cesar los desórdenes de México tan luego como tenga la primera señal de que los intereses americanos se encuentran en peligro.

--No nos importa. Otra cosa. ...

--En Parras, Estado de Coahuila, hubo una sublevación que obligó a los miembros de la





familia del Presidente Madero a salir para la capital.

--Bueno, sígueme.

--El Presidente de la República declaró el diez de febrero que la lealtad del general Pascual Orozco es indiscutible. (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, II, p. 788)<sup>44</sup>

Novelists also exploited the more immediate function of journalism, that of providing information on current events:

--Mira... lee... Lo que nos esperábamos... Ya empezó la 'bola' en en [sic] Puebla.

--¿De veras? ¡A ver!... ¡A ver!

El diario daba la sensacional noticia de la tragedia de los hermanos Serdán en Puebla. Parapetados en su casa en la calle de la Portería de Santa Clara, habían resistido, con media docena de hombres... (Maqueo Castellanos, La ruina de la casona, p. 66)

Such a usage could well be vital to the development of a plot since it afforded a means of revealing events crucial to the story but beyond the scope of the protagonist's knowledge.

A particularly notable instance of a novelist capable of using newspaper quotations judiciously in an entertaining, well-constructed work is that of Miguel Arce in Sólo tú. Through several incidental observations, Arce affirms the importance he attaches to journalism as an informative medium: "Al día siguiente...estaban apareciendo los periódicos en que se daba la sensacional noticia [del levantamiento de Aquiles Serdán]" (p. 112), and as a social force: "la gravedad de la situación trascendía, la noticia llegaba a todas partes, el comentario volaba y la alarma cundía rápidamente.... El periódico se comentaba con ansiedad y los rostros y con gestos de desprecio" (p. 155). Incidental references to journalism also advance the plot of the novel, as in the case of the outbreak of the



Revolution, and serve to increase tension and reader interest. However, Arce is a skillful narrator and uses journalism for very specific purposes, accommodating it to the necessity of writing an entertaining work according to concepts of traditional narrative structure. However, he never mentions specific dates or newspapers, and thus mitigates any possible implication that his work is derived from journalism.

In spite of the way in which the novelists of the Revolution dealt with journalism in their compositions, it is clear that they understood the informative and social function of the genre and its complementary role in depicting national history. The fact that they exploited these elements in their novels does not indicate categorically a tendency toward a journalistic style. Such might be true for some novelists, such as J. A. Reyes, but the majority of writers adapted the technique to the literary character and thematic considerations of their works. Furthermore, novelists still evinced an awareness of journalism as an important vehicle of communication in society, one in which they might collaborate to gain public attention. Thus, although the majority of the novels in the post-Revolutionary period initially appeared as books, a number of novelists used the newspapers as a supplementary means of publication. Occasionally, writers published their novels as 'novelas por entregas', as did Mariano Azuela with Los de abajo and Martín Luis Guzmán with La sombra del caudillo and El águila y la serpiente. However, the usual practice was to offer excerpts of a novel as a literary collaboration in newspapers





and magazines, a common procedure for writers such as Rafael F. Muñoz and Nellie Campobello. On rare occasions, novels of the Revolution first appeared directly as newspaper reports or articles, as in the case of Desde el tren amarillo by F. Ramírez de Aguilar and La consumación del crimen by D. Arenas Guzmán, and in such cases, not surprisingly, the works evinced a strong relationship to newspaper reportage. Nonetheless, the extent of stylistic correlation possible between the novel and journalism depends on two essential factors: a writer cannot be said to adopt a journalistic style, consciously and intentionally, unless he recognizes the specific characteristics of journalistic writing and writes according to its requirements; moreover, the writer's intent is a determining factor since a novelist who publishes literary collaborations in newspapers does not have the same relationship to journalism as one who contributes informative news articles and editorial commentaries. This fact is amply illustrated in the novels of Mariano Azuela, especially in Los de abajo, a work that first appeared by installments in the Texan newspaper El Paso del Norte. Although Azuela used a rapid, succinct and episodic style, this is not the result of the particular mode of publication adopted, since the manuscript of the novel had been completed prior to his exile in Texas. Furthermore, as we have mentioned, a closer examination of narrative structure and technique indicates a remarkable degree of artistic refinement. Thus journalism served merely as the most appropriate vehicle of publication and did not influence stylistic development. The



same is true for Guzmán, who published El águila y la serpiente (1926) and La sombra del caudillo (1929) in the supplement to El Universal,<sup>45</sup> without it having had any noticeable effect on his style. By contrast, Rafael Muñoz came closer to the style of a journalist in Vámonos con Pancho Villa, partly because his experience as a newspaper reporter made him familiar with the style and objectives of direct informative writing, and partly because he incorporated his own experiences as a special correspondent in the composition of the novel. In his case, journalism also exercised further influence:

Según lo ha declarado, primero se le ocurrió entrelazar sus narraciones y pensó escribir la historia de un grupo de soldados revolucionarios. De allí nació una serie de relatos, en cada uno de los cuales moría uno de los soldados. Al caer el sexto de los siete protagonistas, el director del periódico interrumpió su publicación. Muñoz decidió entonces narrar más extensamente la historia del último, Tiburcio Maya. Así surgió la novela Vámonos con Pancho Villa. (A. Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 345)

To a lesser degree, the succinct, direct style of Celestino Herrera Frimont and Manuel W. González may also be attributed to the limitations of space and requirements of brevity imposed by the newspaper, since both had published extracts of their novels in El Universal Ilustrado before making definitive editions of their work. Nonetheless, journalism did not constitute the most noticeable influence since Herrera Frimont clearly demonstrates an ability to create imaginative narrations within a literary framework, while González is evidently much more concerned with historical elements than newspaper reportage. In this they are representative of the majority of the novelists of the





Revolution, who, while familiar with journalism and its functions, were more concerned with creating artistically conceived works of enduring value than in compiling direct, informative accounts of Mexico's Revolutionary experience.

If we review the various aspects of the relationships between the novel and journalism in the period between 1910 and 1940 we can conclude that the interaction between the two genres was minimal and of a somewhat superficial character. The main points of contact derived from a coincidence of political and social themes, often expressed by novelists in quasi-editorial fashion.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, both the newspapers and the novels had recourse to each other for a variety of purposes. Nevertheless, writers of one mode rarely assimilated the style and linguistic characteristics of the other, demonstrating, rather, an awareness of the particular functions and attributes of each genre and its role. Critics of the novels of the Revolution have often referred to the 'journalistic' style of the genre, using this epithet as a key to specify works characterized by rapid, direct narration, concise description and realistic portrayal of the Revolutionary era. John Rutherford, in particular, summarized their style as "straight-forward, concrete, realistic, narrative prose...precisely the style of the newspaperman" (Mexican Society during the Revolution, p. 63). However, the fact that a novelist fashions his compositions as simple, concise prose does not necessarily imply that he



imitates the style of informative journalism. At times, that style is merely the one that best depicts the period dealt with or the specific subject that interests the writer. This is true not only of the novels of the Revolution but of other historical periods as well:

El novelista--sobre todo en las épocas históricas de sobresalto y lucha, que han sido las más frecuentes--ha trabajado con los materiales con los que trabaja el historiador y el sociólogo: los que proporcionan la experiencia inmediata. Poco se ha empeñado en desbastar este material, en pulirlo, en mostrarlo bajo la especie de literatura, urgido como estaba en aprehender el instante que suponía trascendental y aun en participar en él para proporcionarle la figura y la orientación que sus convicciones le dictaban como adecuadas.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, it has been suggested by various critics, for example, Antonio Castro Leal,<sup>48</sup> Ernest Moore and Jaime Delgado, that the style generally ascribed to the novel of the Revolution is precisely that which best suited the presentation of the material. The works of Mariano Azuela appear to substantiate this assessment, for, whereas Azuela's style has been called 'journalistic', an analysis of his novels reveals that his techniques and intentions are far removed from those of informative journalism. Similarly, other major novelists, such as Martín Luis Guzmán and José Rubén Romero, also developed personal styles in re-creating their memories of the Revolution, and still avoided any semblance to newspaper reportage.

The designation 'journalistic' may be more relevant when applied to some of the secondary novelists of the movement. Nevertheless, here again, only a minority of these writers





actually seem to incorporate any elements directly taken from journalism. Even when it can be shown that journalism is the source of their style, they temper that influence with other factors, notably personal evaluations, lyrical descriptions, attention to historical detail, the use of literary devices, and a concern with entertaining the reader. It is important to remember, too, that a great many of the secondary writers were merely following the example set by Azuela whose formula had already been acclaimed by critics as a valid contribution to national literature. Consequently, their stylistic techniques do not denote any special affinity to the informative style of journalism. This is not to say that traces of such elements do not exist, for we have noted a very definite journalistic influence among a few of the lesser novelists of the Revolution. However, such cases usually can be explained by the fact that the novelists were practicing journalists or had previously published parts of their work in newspapers. In any case, these compositions represent such a minor facet of the novel of the Revolution as a whole that it would be inaccurate to attribute their characteristics to the whole spectrum of novels to be included in that category. Indeed, as a whole, the novel of the Revolution encompassed definite artistic merits that set it well apart from journalism and its informative function. One such aspect was the novelists' use of popular language as a means of portraying the Mexican people, their regional differences, and their way of life realistically. Dialogue was closely associated with this device as an appropriate method of giving some insight



into the national character and of commenting on the Revolution, its causes and its consequences. By the same token, nearly all novelists of the Revolution, with the notable exceptions of D. Arenas Guzmán in La consumación del crimen and F. Ramírez de Aguilar in Desde el tren amarillo, developed their works - according to traditional narrative formulae, designed to lead the reader to a climax of action and interest. As part of this technique they also developed a plot intended to create a sense of drama, a facet without equivalent in conventional reportage.<sup>49</sup>

Many of the differences between journalism and the novels of the Revolution are a natural consequence of the developments that had begun to take place in both genres before the pre-Revolutionary period. By 1930, adequate publishing firms existed and provided novelists with a means of preparing cheap editions of their works. At the same time, the level of illiteracy had been significantly reduced, thus increasing the number of readers to whom the novelist had access, even though they were, admittedly, ill-prepared to appreciate the more refined and artistic modes of writing. As a consequence, novelists no longer had to depend on newspapers as the most appropriate medium for reaching their public.

Thematically, novelists, unlike journalists, were not primarily concerned with recording events of the Revolutionary period. On the contrary, much of their production is an attempt to analyse the symbols and myths of the Revolution and to interpret the motives and philosophy of the men engaged in it.





Such an intellectual or analytic approach to reality is quite alien to the documentary nature of journalism. The only sense, then, in which the novel of the Revolution may be said to have a 'journalistic' style is if the term is used in a specific literary sense, as a term intended to define a direct, realistic mode of narration in which the chronological development of historically documented events is recounted. To affirm categorically that the novel of the Revolution was influenced in its inception and in the course of its development by informative journalism would be to negate the fundamental nature of the novel of the Revolution itself.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>F. R. Morton, Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1949), p. 185. Morton was not the only one to hold this opinion; Hernán Robleto had also stated that "La Novela Revolucionaria no está en su forma sino en su inspiración" (Prólogo a Una mujer en la selva, Santiago de Chile: Ercilla, 1936). Antonio Castro Leal also commented on inspiration in the Revolution as the essential element of the genre: "Por novela de la Revolución mexicana hay que entender el conjunto de obras narrativas, de una extensión mayor que el simple cuento largo, inspiradas en las acciones militares y populares, así como en los cambios políticos y sociales que trajeron consigo los diversos movimientos (pacíficos y violentos) de la Revolución..." (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, México: Aguilar, 1972, Vol. I, p. 17). Rafael F. Muñoz, although in basic agreement, held a more restricted view: "Evidentemente que una gran parte de la literatura mexicana contemporánea que ha sido genéricamente catalogada entre la revolucionaria, es antirrevolucionaria, contrarrevolucionaria, o simplemente diferente. Literatura revolucionaria es tan sólo la que tiende a dejar en el ánimo del lector una impresión favorable a la revolución, a sus ideas o a sus hombres" ("¿Cuál es la literatura revolucionaria?", Frente a frente, No 7, January, 1936, p. 11).

<sup>2</sup>"Las primeras novelas de la Revolución Mexicana...son narraciones escritas por actores o testigos de la Revolución misma. La visión del ambiente en que han vivido y la importancia de los acontecimientos que narran, son, naturalmente, distintas en cada grupo de pintores que copian el mismo paisaje. Esas diferencias se deben, en primer lugar, a la diversa participación de cada autor en las luchas revolucionarias y, después, a su distinta personalidad, psicología y situación en la vida.... Pero en todos los autores de la primera época de la novela de la Revolución la realidad tiene, en su fuerza anárquica, rasgos comunes. Provoca una pintura rápida e impresionante. Los acontecimientos desencadenados se imponen y dominan al testigo, no le dan tiempo para que los ordene y organice de acuerdo con un propósito predeterminado, como material dócil de una obra de arte. No hay duda que es una sustancia artística, pero su realidad vertiginosa y bronca resiste a moldes convencionales y a ritmos lentos y monótonos" (Antonio Castro Leal, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, México: Aguilar, 1974, Vol. II, pp. 15 and 16).

<sup>3</sup>Jaime Delgado also noted this: "[El género novelístico revolucionario] ha creado su propio estilo, cortante, breve, directo y realista, en consonancia y armonía con la brevedad y rapidez argumentales" ("La novela mexicana de la Revolución", Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, Vol. XXII, No 61, January, 1955, p. 51).





<sup>4</sup>Adalbert Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973), p. 11. Later he adds: "La influencia de la novela de la Revolución sobre el desarrollo de la literatura mexicana se considera positiva. Es unánime la opinión de que la representación sin prejuicios [sic] de la realidad mexicana abrió las puertas a una reforma literaria radical. Nadie pone en duda que la novela de la Revolución es de una trascendencia nacional incomparablemente superior a la que alcanzó la novela mexicana durante períodos anteriores de su desarrollo. Lo mismo puede decirse de la forma de la novela de la Revolución. En general, a la descripción de las luchas armadas se le presta mayor atención que a las otras formas de la novela de contenido social de los treintas. Se verifica que tales obras más bien son memorias que verdadera novelística y que carecen de una teoría bien definida, pero que indudablemente han creado un nuevo estilo popular" (p. 18).

<sup>5</sup>Jean Franco, Introducción a la literatura hispanoamericana (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1970), p. 205. F. R. Morton offered another perspective: "[Con la Revolución] los escritores vieron...su propia libertad de las formas europeas y se empeñaron en crear una forma nueva y mejor constituida para expresar su propia cultura" (Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 17).

<sup>6</sup>Everardo García Erosa, "La novela, forja de un México mejor", Diario del Sureste (Mérida), November 23, 1936, p. 3. Antonio Magaña Esquivel also held this opinion: "No se advierte en México una literatura pre-revolucionaria que organizara y preparara los espíritus y se afanara en la interpretación de las hondas cuestiones sociales, y que facilitara, como consecuencia, el camino de la Revolución" ("Literatura y Revolución", Diario del Sureste, October 6, 1936, p. 3).

Xavier Icaza (La Revolución Mexicana y la literatura, México: 1934, pp. 25 and 30) also expressed the same opinion. Icaza and García Erosa also contrasted the situation in Mexico with that in France and Russia, countries where there had existed a pre-Revolutionary literature.

<sup>7</sup>Fernando Alegría, Literatura y revolución (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1971), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup>José Luis Martínez gave the following evaluation of the linguistic innovations: "En estas novelas maduraba...la expresión nacional y autónoma de nuestra literatura, en cuanto en ellas se manifestaba, en su aspecto lingüístico y en su aspecto espiritual, lo que puede llamarse el estilo de un pueblo. Y aun en su forma misma, estas novelas abandonan a menudo los esquemas y la retórica de la prosa narrativa europea y crean sus formas propias en las que se mezclan la biografía y la historia noveladas con la pura invención, en las que la profundidad se alcanza por revelaciones y desnudamientos fugaces de las conciencias y en las que se muestra la eficacia de los





peculiares recursos que posee el pueblo de México para expresar su drama" (Problemas literarios, México: Obregón, 1955, pp. 156-157).

<sup>9</sup>Julia Hernández, Novelistas y cuentistas de la Revolución (México: Unidad Mexicana de escritores, 1960), p. 17).

<sup>10</sup>Berta Gamboa de Camino, "The Novel of the Mexican Revolution", Renascent Mexico (New York: Covici Friede, 1935), p. 263. Jaime Delgado expressed the same idea: "...los escritores [de las novelas de la Revolución] olvidan casi por completo su fantasía creadora, arrumban su imaginación en los más ocultos desvanes de su espíritu y usan de su talento, más que en crear, en recrear los acontecimientos sin apertarse un punto de la fidelidad al hecho histórico" ("La novela mexicana de la Revolución", El Universal, August 21, 1955, p. 29).

Perhaps the best example of the interaction between the three genres can be seen in the documentation of the revolt and subsequent execution in 1927 of the presidential candidate, General Francisco R. Serrano. This affair is historical, an integral aspect of the political intrigues common to the post-Revolution. Moreover, the events were extensively and graphically reported in the newspapers of the time, while at least two major novelists, Martín Luis Guzmán, in La sombra del caudillo, and Mariano Azuela, in El camarada Pantoja, incorporated these events into their novels. Adalbert Dessau cites another example of historical events that appeared in the newspaper and the novel: "En la literatura narrativa puede observarse, desde principios de los veinte, un aumento constante de obras de contenido revolucionario, ...que en su mayoría aparecieron en los periódicos. El asesinato de Pancho Villa, ocurrido el 20 de julio de 1923, al recrudecerse los conflictos sociales, dio origen a una serie de memorias de la Revolución, de las que deben mencionarse Memorias de Pancho Villa, publicadas por Rafael F. Muñoz en 1923, y Pancho Villa, una vida de romance y tragedia de Teodoro Torres, publicado en 1924. En el terreno de la historia ganó considerablemente la Revolución como tema literario. Un punto culminante de este proceso lo representó, en 1924 y 1925, el 'descubrimiento' de Mariano Azuela" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 261).

<sup>11</sup>José Mancisidor also discussed this close relationship, although it is something of an overstatement to say that, for a history of the Mexican Revolution, "no hay que ir a las obras publicadas en libros, hay que meterse en las hemerotecas y tomar de diarios y revistas, noticias, artículos, ensayos, juicios y síntesis de polémicas a lo largo de los cuales los conceptos revolucionarios han sido depurados" ("La historia de la Revolución", El Nacional, October 31, 1949, quoted by Stanley Ross in Fuentes de la historia contemporánea.... Guanajuato: Colegio de México, 1965, p. xxxiii).

<sup>12</sup>Luis de Bolonia, "Novela de la Revolución", La Nación,





November 22, 1953, p. 14. Other important critics agreed with this idea, among them J. Rutherford: "The novels of the Mexican Revolution...have a distinctly documentary nature.... They contain a greater portion than do most novels of straightforward reporting of events seen and heard, and a smaller part than usual of the author's inner world, of imagined happenings" (Mexican Society during the Revolution, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 4).

According to Beryl McManus, "La revolución fué iniciada por las masas, no por los intelectuales... Por eso tenemos una novela que es descriptiva, anecdótica--en fin, periodística" ("La técnica del nuevo realismo en la novela mexicana de la revolución", Memoria del Cuarto Congreso del Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, La Habana: 1949, p. 314). Later she added, "Muchas de [las técnicas características de la novela] surgen de la influencia periodística. El periodismo siempre se preocupa más de efectos y contenidos que de forma y estilo" (p. 318).

<sup>13</sup>Ernest R. Moore, "The Novel of the Mexican Revolution", Mexican Life, No 7, Vol. XVI, July, 1940, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup>The ability of Gómez Palacio and his style in evoking scenes and tones is somewhat reminiscent of Yáñez. The tonal description of the atmosphere with which the novelist begins La loca imaginación, allowing for considerable differences in style, recalls the sense of sterility and desolation evoked in the 'Acto preparatorio' of Al filo del agua:

Era domingo. Anunciábalo el cielo, que imaginaria fauce parecía abierta en descomunal bostezo, y confirmábanlo cifras rojas en los calendarios.

Erase a últimos de otoño y próximas las seis de la tarde: ello en un remoto poblado del norte de nuestra república.

Un viento cascado, que se empeñaba en cantar, hubiera puesto mohino al que le prestara oídos, siquier fuese breves momentos. Descolgábase calles adentro de la población tristonía ésta y hasta insoportable de puro tediosa, sobre todo a ciertas horas del día, tan despintadas en las ciudades como pintorescas en el campo.

Filtrábase el aire y depositaba en la ciudad un sedimento de doliente tristecilla, resabio que traía de muy lejos, tras arrastrarse en las llanuras e impregnarse en la gran melancolía de las comarcas septentrionales. (p. 50)

<sup>15</sup>Although the 'colonialista' novel marked a new tendency, the model itself was old. Historical novels had been popular since Sir Walter Scott brought the genre to prominence in the eighteenth century. Early Mexican novelists had exploited the trend to recount events of Mexico's Aztec and Colonial past. (Consult, for example, Antonio Castro Leal, La novela del México





colonial, 2 vols., México: Aguilar, 1964.)

<sup>16</sup>J. L. Martínez pointed out the antecedents of the movement: "La moda 'colonialista', parecida hacia 1918, puede reconocer sus orígenes inmediatos en los estudios sobre arquitectura colonial del ateneísta Jesús T. Acevedo o en los más antiguos de Luis González Obregón y del Marqués de San Francisco sobre diversas cuestiones de aquella época.... Si se recuerda que movimientos similares ocurrieron en España y en la Argentina, por ejemplo, hacia los mismos años, puede relacionarse el 'colonialismo' mexicano con aquellas corrientes" (México: 50 años de Revolución, Vol. 4, pp. 321-322). Among the immediate antecedents in Spanish America one can point to La gloria de Don Ramiro (1908) by the Argentinian Enrique Larreta and the Tradiciones peruanas (1872-1906) by Ricardo Palma.

<sup>17</sup>These novelists were not the only members of the group; one must also include the short-story writer Manuel Horta, the poet Alfonso Cravioto and the literary critic Manuel Toussaint. Although 1926 is usually given as the final year of the movement, 'colonialista' novels continued to appear after that date. The most outstanding case is that of A. del Valle-Arizpe who never abandoned the movement and published works such as Del tiempo pasado (1932), Virreyes y virreinas de la Nueva España (1933), Historia de la ciudad de México, según relatos de sus cronistas (1939), Cuentos del México antiguo (1939), En México y en otros siglos (1948), Calle vieja y calle nueva (1949), Personajes de historia y de leyenda (1953), Cuando había virreyes (1956).

<sup>18</sup>Manuel Pedro González, Trayectoria de la novela (México: Ed. Botas, 1951), p. 408.

<sup>19</sup>These aspects are clearly demonstrated in the novels of A. del Valle-Arizpe. In Doña Leonor he offers the following observations on life in the country, contrasted with that in the city: "¿Qué sabían estas pobres vidas de esas otras vidas lujuriantes, perversas y cálidas, rosados frutos de pecado, cuando sólo saben decir de cosas dulces y de cosas ingenuas y de cosas devotas, y gustan en la benigna paz de este pueblo lleno de campanas, el deleite de los callados goces, ignorando, norabuena, las inquietudes y tristezas de la carne?" (pp. 18-19). On the last page of the novel he summarizes the essential, moral lesson: "Este es un advertimiento de Dios Nuestro Señor, por que sosiegue la sensualidad y cierre ya el corazón a todas las aficiones veladas, y tuerza, señora, hacia otro lado su vivir; porque nuestros placeres de carne son efímeros y esquivos, y nuestra vida vanidosa está sitiada por la próxima muerte. Sólo por la renunciación y por la ardiente caridad podemos redimirnos" (p. 109). Similarly, on the title page of Sor Adoración del Divino Verbo Julio Jiménez Rueda declared, "Las obras donde entran Dios y la religión serán siempre superiores a las que versan puramente sobre cosas humanas."





<sup>20</sup>J. Brushwood held the same opinion of these writers: "The authors cultivated an overly archaic style which they supposed would enhance the atmosphere of the past they wanted to create; but they tended to overdo it, and the result is often more precious than convincing" (Mexico in Its Novel, p. 186). Genaro Estrada proposed a basic formula for the 'colonialista' novel: "La fabla es la médula del colonialismo aplicado a las letras. La receta más fácil: se coge un asunto del siglo XVI, del siglo XVII o del siglo XVIII y se le escribe en lengua vulgar. Después se le van cambiando las frases, enrevesándolas, aplicándoles transposiciones y, por último, viene la alteración de las palabras. Hay ciertas palabras que no suenan a colonial. Para hacerlas sonar se les sustituye con un arcaísmo, real o inventado, y he aquí la fabla consumada" (Pero Galán, p. 13).

<sup>21</sup>Although there is a general tendency to give pre-eminence to the novel of the Revolution in this era, it is essential to remember that there were other important literary movements, in particular those of the 'estridentista' writers and the 'contemporáneos'. Their work represented avant-garde artistic and aesthetic tendencies, in effective contrast to the novel of the Revolution. A discussion of such works is included in Chapter VI of this study.

<sup>22</sup>J. S. Brushwood, "La novela mexicana frente al porfirismo", Historia Mexicana, Vol. 7, 1957-1958, p. 400.

<sup>23</sup>Mariano Azuela, Obras completas, 3 vols. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958), II, pp. 762, 763.

<sup>24</sup>These novels were: Andrés Pérez, maderista (1911), Los de abajo (1915), Los caciques (1917), Las moscas (1918), and Las tribulaciones de una familia decente (1918).

<sup>25</sup>See Francisco Monterde (ed.), Mariano Azuela y la crítica mexicana: estudios, artículos, reseñas, Colección Sep Setentas, No 86 (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1973).

<sup>26</sup>Victoriano Salado Alvarez, "Las obras del Dr. Azuela", Excélsior, February 4, 1925.

<sup>27</sup>Martí Casanovas, "La literatura mexicana y la revolución", Atenea, Tomo XI, Año VI (June, 1929), p. 387.

<sup>28</sup>Jaime Torres Bodet, "Perspectivas de la literatura mexicana actual", Contemporáneos, II, September, 1928, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup>Antonio Magaña Esquivel, "La significación de la teoría revolucionaria en la novela de Azuela", La novela de la Revolución (México: Biblioteca del Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1965), p. 81.

<sup>30</sup>For a more detailed discussion, consult Richard Young,





"Narrative Structure in Two Novels by Mariano Azuela: Los caciques and Los de abajo", Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos, Vol. II, No 2, Winter, 1978, pp. 161-181.

<sup>31</sup>For a critical study of this topic refer to Seymour Menton, "La estructura épica de Los de abajo", in La novela iberoamericana contemporánea (Caracas: Organización del Bienestar Estudiantil, 1969), or "La estructura épica de Los de abajo y un prólogo especulativo", Hispania, L, 1967, No 4, pp. 1001-1011.

<sup>32</sup>Luis Leal, Mariano Azuela (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), p. 111.

<sup>33</sup>For example, he published Los de abajo in El Paso del Norte (Texas, 1915), Los caciques in El Universal (1917) and El Nacional (1917), De como al fin lloró Juan Pablo in Revista Universal (New York, 1918), and El desquite in El Universal Ilustrado (1925).

<sup>34</sup>The literary aspects of Guzmán's production in general and of El águila y la serpiente in particular were praised by a number of critics, including E. Abreu Gómez, "Del estilo de Martín Luis Guzmán", Ruta, No 10, 1939, p. 41; Salvador Calvillo Madrigal, La revolución que nos contaron (México: Metáfora, 1959), p. 24; F. Rand Norton, who declared that Guzmán merited "el honor de ser unos de los mejores prosistas del continente americano" (Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 130); and, John Rutherford, Mexican Society during the Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 62.

<sup>35</sup>Guzmán's assimilation of certain aspects of journalism into La sombra del caudillo is dealt with more fully later in this chapter.

<sup>36</sup>According to R. A. Castagnaro, it is Romero's oral style that constitutes the main merit of his work: "Romero's most typical and charming manner is that of the raconteur, the conversationalist in writing. Hence, his stylistic forte is narration and dialogue. His characters, enormous in their variety, are best characterized when they speak..." ("Rubén Romero and the Novel of the Mexican Revolution", Hispania, Vol. XXXVI, No 3, August, 1953, p. 304).

<sup>37</sup>John Rutherford seconded this opinion: "Although he spent a short period as a newspaperman, journalism was a secondary importance in the literary formation of Romero, who was by profession a civil servant and diplomat" (Mexican Society during the Revolution, p. 65).

<sup>38</sup>He reiterated the same idea in Contra Villa: "...estos puntos servirán mañana para los historiadores que vengan; para los que formen la verdadera historia de la Revolución..."





(p. 7). By the same token, he did not propose to write the history of the fighting: "...voy a seguir hilvanando mis relatos con el idioma del pueblo, sin hueca literatura y sin palabrones, apegándome a la verdad, pero a la verdad que yo ví, que yo palpé y que yo viví; sin juzgar las acciones que los hombres, sobre todo aquéllos que estaban fuera del alcance de mi visual y lejos del terreno de mi actuación" (Contra Villa, p. 7).

<sup>39</sup>Arenas Guzmán did not intend to give a definitive judgement of the Revolution, although he indicated his historical objectives clearly in the introduction to the work: "Este no es una Historia más o menos completa de la Revolución Mexicana; no tiene sino modestas pretensiones de aportación narrativa o documental que, confío, será tomada en cuenta por quienes dediquen su voluntad, su aptitud y su estudio a escribir una verdadera historia del intenso movimiento político y social que se inició en el año de 1910" (p. 7).

<sup>40</sup>Literary qualities are also to be found in the works of novelists who did not deal specifically with themes of the Revolution. Although Xavier Icaza (Dilema, 1917) and J. M. Puig Casauranc (Gente mexicana, 1924) were not important novelists, they showed creative and artistic ability. However, the Revolution does not figure prominently in their work, since it was seen as an event from the past that, for some, was merely an inconvenience, and, for others, a force that destroyed a better way of life.

<sup>41</sup>Max Aub, Guía de narradores de la Revolución Mexicana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1969), pp. 43-44). Se llevaron el cañón para Bachimba, another of Muñoz's novels, has a similar technical development, but its literary aspects are more pronounced. Through a first person narrative, detailing the physical and spiritual development of Alvaro Abasolo, the novel takes on the more unified form of the 'bildungsroman'. "El estilo se ha vuelto más poético, menos brutal, más ocupado por la naturaleza y de un modo más lírico de pintarla. Igual ha pasado con el fondo. Ya no es el hecho sangriento sino el hecho emocional el que toma el lugar principal. Indican estos cambios un mejoramiento indudable en la obra literaria de Muñoz. Por otra parte, la fuerza de su estilo periodístico, su habilidad de retratar detalles físicos y psicológicos no han disminuído sino alcanzado aun más poder" (F. R. Morton, Los novelistas de la Revolución, p. 159).

<sup>42</sup>The best example of Othón Díaz's editorialist tone in S.F.Z. 33 Escuela is to be found in his long explanation (pages 117-124 of his work) of the best educational programme to be used by teachers in raising the political consciousness of the masses.

<sup>43</sup>F. R. Morton summarized the fundamental characteristics of Ferretis' style as follows: "La literatura novelística...no





llama la atención. Un sentido de superficialidad invade...todas las novelas de Ferretis, excepto la primera [Tierra caliente], y esta superficialidad afecta al deseo de crear una obra a la vez artística y conmovedora. Relatar el hecho sin darle personalidad, emplear un personaje sin explicarlo, es el modo de escribir de Ferretis. ...su ironía y su sátira se pueden hacer sentir mejor" (Los novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 219).

<sup>44</sup>The newspaper articles mentioned here can in fact be found in El Imparcial, from January 1st, 1912 (when Zapata attacked Cuernavaca) through to the middle of February, 1912 (the declaration of President Taft was reported on February 6th while Madero's reaffirmation of Orozco's loyalty was carried in the February 12th edition).

<sup>45</sup>He also published excerpts in Mexican Life. Specific references to his collaborations are given in Ernest Moore, Bibliografía de novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana (1941; republished New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), pp. 94-95.

<sup>46</sup>One other minor point of contact between journalism and the novel of the Revolution may be seen in the graphic sensationalism encouraged by newspapers, a factor often paralleled in the graphic and brutally realistic descriptions found in many novels.

<sup>47</sup>Rosario Castellanos, "La novela mexicana contemporánea y su valor testimonial", Hispania, Vol. XLVII, No 2, May, 1964, p. 223.

<sup>48</sup>"[La realidad] provoca una pintura rápida e impresionante. Los acontecimientos desencadenados se imponen y dominan al testigo, no le dan tiempo para que los ordene y organice de acuerdo con un propósito predeterminado, como material dócil de una obra de arte. No hay duda que es una sustancia artística, pero su realidad vertiginosa y bronca resiste a moldes convencionales y a ritmos lentos y monótonos" (A. Castro Leal, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, I, p. 16).

Dessau reiterated this assessment, stating that the novel of the Revolution "se remite a las formas autóctonas de la narrativa. Las novelas autobiográfico-históricas de la Revolución son--por su tema, mensaje, construcción e idioma--la forma literaria nacional más adecuada a la fase armada de la Revolución" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 426).

<sup>49</sup>In an article on the novel of the Mexican Revolution Jaime Delgado wrote that if the novelist's imagination "se limita a copiar la realidad, y su trabajo a describirla como se ofrece a los ojos, esa realidad es lo suficientemente trágica como para dar a las novelas un nuevo elemento importante: el dramatismo. Un dramatismo, en este caso, sin desmelenamientos, sin adulteraciones, sin truculencia, carente por completo de este





matiz melodramático..." ("La novela mexicana de la Revolución", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. XXII, No 61, January, 1955, p. 82).



V

The 'cristero' novel

In 1926, Mexico experienced another in a series of localized uprisings stemming from the political conflict of the Mexican Revolution. The 'cristero' rebellion,<sup>1</sup> however, was somewhat unique in comparison with other revolts in that it spread over a much larger area of Mexico, and was of a decidedly reactionary nature. Headed by Roman Catholic priests and laymen, and backed by leaders of the "Unión Popular de Jalisco", the "Asociación Católica de la Juventud Mexicana" (the A.C.J.M. or 'acejotaemistas'), and the "Liga Defensora de la Libertad Religiosa", this revolt was the ultimate expression of the Church's aversion towards a series of government moves intended to entrench radical, Revolutionary principles and to curb the influence and prerogatives of the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> These organizations specifically opposed the introduction of obligatory, lay education and other measures that threatened the continued existence of religious institutions. The uprising which began in 1926 lasted for three years, until the interim president, Emilio Portes Gil, evolved a peace proposal acceptable to both the Church and the Revolutionary extremists. However, the accord acceded to none of the Church's demands, and





intensified the frustration of the Catholics, their lack of confidence in the government, and their distrust of the federal government's attitudes and actions. This situation resulted in fresh outbreaks of fighting in the 1930's.

As with the Mexican Revolution, the 'cristero' rebellion was a new source of inspiration to novelists, who sought to portray the mood of the nation, to record the development of political and social conflicts, and to analyse the ideals and motivations of the rebels. The 'cristero' novels generally represented a response to one of two objectives: thesis novels intended to argue in favour of one of the combatants, and amenable narratives, intended for the entertainment of the reader, in which the 'cristero' war serves as background to a predominantly fictional work. Because they are essentially records of the secondary effects of the Revolution, the 'cristero' novels have been placed, by critics such as Octavio Barreda, in the same general classification as the novel of the Revolution:

Participa fatalmente...de todas o casi todas las características de la 'novela de la Revolución Mexicana': la misma preocupación social; los mismos métodos descriptivos; el mismo ángulo de enfoque en la presentación de escenas y personajes; ese gusto de huir de verbalismos o explicaciones superfluas, e ir vertiginosamente, en el modo más crudo y sintético, al meollo de la cuestión; y ese realismo áspero y expresionista, en el que, con unas cuantas palabras, y con unos cuantos giros y modismos de expresión locales y genuinos, nos da el máximo de movimiento, visualidad y efectos.<sup>3</sup>

Superficial stylistic similarities are particularly evident in the realistic description of military life and campaigns, in



historical and 'costumbrista' documentation,<sup>4</sup> in a certain use of a rapid, succinct form of narration. However, a more careful examination reveals fundamental differences between the 'cristero' novel and the novel of the Revolution. Although both were inspired by actual occurrences and relate verifiable historical events, 'cristero' novelists, as a rule, avoided the direct documentation of history typical of the novelists of the Revolution, since they adapted it to the thematic and stylistic demands of their work. Consequently, 'cristero' novels are often of greater interest as works of literature than as historical documents. As F. L. Gelskey notes, "Las obras que forman esta literatura, sin excepción tienen como móvil los hechos históricos.... Poco a poco, los datos fueron tomando forma literaria, ya como historias o como cuentos o relatos verídicos. Todo esto culminó en la producción de novelas, por ser éste el medio popular que la gente aprovecha y lee más" (Las novelas cristeras..., p. 15).<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to the Revolution of 1910, which was more of an iconoclastic movement of social change, the 'cristero' rebellion was staunchly promoted by the dogmatically reactionary elements of Mexican society. Novels written under these circumstances naturally reflected the tendentious and partisan prejudices of the writers, especially when intended to corroborate their political points of view and justify the actions and principles of particular factions. The blatant proselytizing was moderated somewhat by escapist elements in the content, usually in the form of amorous subplots or adventure





narratives, intended to entertain a general readership. Not surprisingly, A. Dessau concluded that, "la importancia decisiva de la historia de amor...diferencia decisivamente a las novelas contrarrevolucionarias de todas las novelas de la Revolución" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 293). The 'cristero' novelists, however, lacked the technical mastery of novelists of the Revolution such as M. L. Guzmán, J. R. Romero and Mariano Azuela, and a comparison between the work of the two groups reveals the artistic poverty of the 'cristero' novels, an over-insistence on partisan politics and an excessive use of the effects of sentimental romanticism. At the same time, there are differences of language. Although both groups of writers exploited the colloquial language of the masses in their novels as a means of portraying the mentality and life styles of the Mexican people, the 'cristero' novelists restricted this technique to secondary characters. The majority of their protagonists belong to the educated and well-to-do bourgeoisie, who were both articulate in their native Spanish and often competent in foreign languages.

When the particular characteristics of the 'cristero' novel, its didacticism, its language and its function as entertainment, are considered together, it is somewhat more reminiscent of the popular prose compositions of the late XIXth century than of the novels of the Mexican Revolution. Nevertheless, because critics have often incorporated 'cristero' writing into the general classification of the novels of the Revolution, it is appropriate that any evaluation of the



relationship between the 'cristero' novel and journalism be based on the same criteria as those applied to the newspaper and the novel of the Revolution.

Stylistically, the 'cristero' novelists can be divided into three main categories: those whose work is a reflection of certain literary aspirations; those whose commitment to their cause led them, in the manner of many novelists of the Revolution, to sacrifice the principles of literary composition to the desire to reflect historical and social concerns; and, those whose objective was to produce light, entertaining narratives, in which the 'cristero' rebellion served principally as background.

The best representative among the writers of the literary group was Jorge Gram (pseudonym of Father David G. Ramírez), author of the fanatically pro-'cristero' novels Héctor (1929) and Jahel (1935). His style is clearly evocative of popular narratives of the late XIXth century, particularly in his didactic tone, his undisguised manipulation of plot for thematic purposes, his slow, deliberate unfolding of events, his exploitation of the traditional formula of carefully developing a climax, and his use of a sentimental story as the vehicle for entertaining and educating the reader. According to the foreward to Héctor, the use of these elements establish Gram's superiority over contemporary, Revolutionary literature: "Su autor...supo, en verdad, producir una obra genuinamente nacional en que se retrata magistralmente el verdadero pueblo mejicano, no el estrafalarío y repugnante que la literatura revolucionaria





y ciertos escritores de este país ofrecen al público en obras convencionales."<sup>6</sup> The explanation of Gram's choice of style and content, however, can be related to the fact that they matched the 'artistic' development of his thesis, his description of the sufferings of the Catholics and his justification of their right to armed defense.

By comparison with Jorge Gram, the style of José Guadalupe de Anda in Los cristeros (1937) is more reminiscent of that of the novels of the Revolution. The narration of events is direct and rapid, depicting the essential details of the armed conflict and the plight of the masses. At the same time, 'costumbrista' techniques and colloquial language<sup>7</sup> are employed to portray the underlying motives and psychology of the rebellion.<sup>8</sup> As a work of literature, Los cristeros is extremely weak, the result of Anda's subordination of all other concerns to the immediate task of developing a thesis. Although he wrote a novel intended to entertain the reader, he felt the more pressing need to explain the detrimental effects of the Cristero war on the nation as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

The third category of 'cristero' novelists, those who intended their works chiefly as entertainment for the reader, is best illustrated by Jesús Goytórtua (Pensativa, 1944) and Fernando Robles (La virgen de los cristeros, 1934). Neither was concerned with responding to the demands of more recent literary developments and styles, but solely with composing interesting, pleasing works in the traditional, time-proven formulae perfected by popular, XIXth century novelists such as H. Rider



Haggard, Anthony Hope, and F. A. Ponson du Terrail. The plots of their novels had the appeal of a sentimental love story, complicated by a series of exciting and unexpected developments that held the reader's attention. Chapters were suspended at a crucial point in the narrative or ended with an unexpected twist or complication; the story itself was superficial, centred upon the characters and their adventures, and did not require the reader to pay serious, but inopportune, attention to humanitarian ideals or universal truths. One of the best examples of this style among 'cristero' novelists is Jesús Goytortúa's Pensativa. At the end of Chapter XII the author recounts how the protagonist accompanies the beautiful and enigmatic Pensativa and various other individuals, to the accursed and long-abandoned 'Huerta del Conde' to pray for the souls of two 'cristeros' killed there several years before:

El rosario terminó. Nos levantamos y dejando a los cirios arder solitarios en la piedra, caminamos por el sendero hasta llegar al punto opuesto a aquel por el que Genoveva, Fidel y yo habíamos venido. Allí estaban los caballos de Pensativa y Basilio, atados a un arbusto.

--Vámonos-- dijo Genoveva, montando ayudada por Basilio.

Fidel la imitó y se alejó unos pasos, tirando del ronzal de la mula. El sol caía a plomo. Pensativa miraba con fascinación la tapia derruida.

--Vámonos-- le propuse, apiadado.

Ella empezó a esbozar una sonrisa. Y no la acabó. Creíamos que el infierno iba a volcarse sobre la tierra, que los muertos volvían. No olvidaré jamás. Mil y mil veces resonará en mis oídos... Oiré siempre aquel grito atroz de espantosa agonía. (p. 76)

On this note of suspense, the chapter is ended.

Generally, the 'cristero' novelists were second and third





rate writers, chiefly because they emphasized the importance of thematic objectives at the expense of literary finesse. The merit of their work also varied in relation to the degree of interplay between the writer's creative imagination and the importance he attached to historical veracity. Goytórtua and Robles illustrate this principle. Their sentimentally poignant, but entertaining, narratives ignore the demands of historical conciseness. For them, history was only one of the elements to be manipulated in the process of creating an original story intended to provide the most entertainment possible. As a consequence, although Goytórtua may not be an outstanding literary figure, he is, at least in the opinion of Pedro González, a master story teller:

Goytórtua resume en esta obra varios géneros de novela. Por una parte es, esencialmente, una novela de tema amoroso combinado con el tema histórico que fué la guerra cristera; pero, además, la trama, a ratos, nos da la impresión de que estamos leyendo una novela de misterio, una novela fantástica y aun policíaca y en todo momento una narración romántica. Todo ello aderezado con una técnica bien trabajada y la trama calculada y dispuesta para intrigar y sostener la atención hasta la última página.<sup>10</sup>

Other 'cristero' novelists adopted a more factual approach to history, and stressed this objective in their works. One such writer was Sierra Madrigal, who wrote his rabidly anti-'cristero' novel La madre Conchita within a fortnight of the assassination of President Alvaro Obregón, on July 17, 1928, to provide a factual account of the events leading up to the crime. Although the initial pages of the work appear to preface a



novelized account of the developments, Madrigal rapidly modifies this possibility by stating his objective of recording the complicity of the 'cristera' abbess, Concepción Acevedo de la Llata, who was referred to in the press as "la Madre Conchita". Madrigal himself explained the juxtaposition of fact and fiction: "Nadie podrá dudar de los datos rigurosamente históricos que me sirven para este cuento i sólo he dado a la fantasía el margen necesario para hacer resaltar la verdad dentro del marco de la narración" ("Introducción" to La Madre Conchita, p. 3). Despite this assertion, Madrigal falls short of writing an acceptable, historical, or even literary, account, a failure that derives principally from his inability to control personal prejudices and Revolutionary fervour. As a result, La Madre Conchita becomes a proselytizing, emotional diatribe. Its weaknesses are evident throughout the work, as, for example, in the account of the attempt against Obregón's life on November 13, 1927, in Chapultepec Park. Although this event is historically verifiable, Madrigal's description does not reflect the objective perspective of the historian nor even the informative viewpoint of the journalist; rather, it is based on an emotional association with the greatness of Mexico's past: "Bajo las frondas del bosque milenario, recreo de burgueses; del bosque en donde antaño pasearon sus ocios los emperadores aztecas...se consumió el atentado" (p. 38). The concluding sentence of the novel, "¡Madre Revolución! ¡Estamos en pie!" (p. 43), is the final declaration of the author's frenetically partisan treatment of the material.





Pro-'cristero' novelists such as Jorge Gram also subscribed to the need for historical veracity. When he published Héctor, Gram stated that his intention was to provide an accurate account of "la gloriosa lucha desarrollada de 1926 a 1929, en que se demostró al mundo entero que en Méjico se ama la libertad, la religión nacional y a Cristo hasta el heroísmo, hasta el martirio, hasta la muerte" (p. 277). Like Madrigal, he failed to meet his objective because he allowed his personal feelings about the vindication of the 'cristero' cause and his aspirations as a novelist to override his function as an objective chronicler. Gram himself was aware that his aspiration as a creative writer heavily influenced the novel, but nevertheless reiterated its function as history: "Por exigirle la unidad de la novela y por otros motivos que no se escaparán a los lectores, varios de los hechos que figuran aquí como fondo en el desarrollo de la acción y muchos de los episodios de la misma novela no corresponden, ni por el lugar, ni por la fecha, ni por el nombre de los actores, a la verdad; pero podemos afirmar que todos o casi todos fueron una palpitante realidad en otras fechas, otros lugares y con otros nombres de actores" ('Nota preliminar' to the first edition of Héctor, p. 277). The 'otros motivos' cited by Gram consisted chiefly in making the reader aware of the principles of the 'cristero' cause and in convincing him of their validity. Gram used literary techniques to convey these principles, but, as with his use of history, subordinated literary creativity to thematic objectives. He relied heavily on the effects of contrast and allegory: the



'cristeros' epitomized justice and right, and were idealized in religious and classical imagery; the Revolutionary forces, on the other hand, represented evil and treachery, and were symbolized by animals. To enhance his themes further, Gram carefully manipulated the plot in order to create a sentimental atmosphere in which to place the protagonists, and to sway the reader in favour of the 'cristero' cause.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, the sentimental narrative was also designed to promote didactic and partisan themes by illustrating the powers of love, commitment to Christianity and adherence to 'cristero' ideals.

When writing historical accounts, the 'cristero' novelists did not restrict themselves only to contemporary events. They also endeavoured to document and summarize the broader implications of Mexican history by comparing current affairs with earlier religious difficulties and the way in which they had been resolved. In most cases, however, their comparisons were inappropriate, mainly because novelists could not subdue their personal and factional commitments sufficiently in order to evaluate historical precedents objectively. In the end, the subjective interpretation, combined with the practice of interweaving an imaginative plot into the historical narrative, effectively invalidated most 'cristero' literature as history.

The language used by the 'cristero' novelists was generally on a level much different from that used by novelists of the Mexican Revolution. Whereas the best of the latter developed an innovative, dynamic style, often of a high, literary calibre, the former frequently wrote haphazardly, with





more concern for the topics on which they expressed themselves than the style in which they did so. Their language therefore depended on purpose and generally fell into one of two categories according to whether they wished to influence the reader with their rhetoric or entertain him with a light work of literature. The final products in the first case often amounted to little more than trite and emotional declamations, a good illustration of which is the following example of Gram's somewhat superfluous aside to evoke the absent heroine in Jahel:

Y si desea el lector noticias de la novia... cierre los ojos, envuélvase en su sueño de poesía, acumule todos los encantos que de Margarita han quedado esparcidos a lo largo de esta viviente historia; imprégnelos de la ley divina, blanca y radiosa, y caiga de rodillas, que lo que ante el lector surgirá será el virginal hechizo del amor encendido en el fuego sagrado del Amor Vivo. ¡Salve, mujer! ¡Salve, esposa! (p. 47)

Even in the description of battle scenes, authors often succumbed to partisan rhetoric:

Las dos corrientes de soldados, los del patio y los del cuerpo de guardia, se chocan, se ataratan, se apretujan con la suprema desesperación de un ejército sorprendido, copado, desarmado. Y cuando un oficial callista, sobrepuesto a la situación, pretende reorganizarlos dando un grito de "¡Adelante!", aquel grito se pierde entre las detonaciones de los cuatro hombres que Héctor había dejado a la entrada de la calle. Es tarde ya. Los soldados de Héctor, usando ya su nuevo armamento, empujan y machucan a punta de bala a la masa hirviente de soldados embotellados, que, entre codazos y patadas, blasfemias y maldiciones, logran, por fin, retroceder hasta el patio y de ahí escapar por los corrales interiores, dejando muertos y heridos, municiones y bagajes en poder del enemigo triunfante.

Media hora después Héctor pasa revista a sus tropas iniciales. Son ya sesenta hombres, bien



montados, bien armados, bien municionados; todos ilesos, todos satisfechos: la primera lucha heroica está realizada: ¡Viva Cristo Rey! (Jorge Gram, Héctor, p. 204)

In addition to works founded on religious and political moralizing, the 'cristero' novelists also wrote lighter, more entertaining novels in an unsophisticated style intended to appeal to the tastes and demands of the general public. In such cases, they often combined literary skill with an intuitive ability to tell a good story. This much is evident in the novels of Jesús Goytortúa, and can be seen in the opening paragraph of Pensativa:

Encuentro un amargo placer en recordar aquellos días en los que mi existencia abandonó su cauce normal, en los que me vi envuelto en una tormenta que para siempre trazó su huella en mí. Jamás podré olvidar a Pensativa. Me sucede a veces oír su voz entre las ráfagas que se precipitan sobre los fresnos de mi jardín y en mil ocasiones me he estremecido encontrando en algunas mujeres algo como reflejos de su gesto aquel tan grave, saudadoso, que le valió el nombre de Pensativa. No he vuelto a Santa Clara de las Rocas, ni he visto otra vez las nubes abandonar su imagen a las aguas del río; no volveré a la casona del Plan de los Tordos, ni dejaré a mi caballo bordear los precipicios de la cordillera, no oiré, en la margen de la Poza de los Cantores, brotar el grito de angustia que una tarde me hizo conocer el terror junto a los viejos muros de la Huerta del Conde. (p. 1)

Certain literary skill is apparent even in Los cristeros, by José Guadalupe de Anda, the novel that most closely approximates the simple, direct style of the secondary novelists of the Revolution. Anda is obviously conscious of his art as a prose writer and demonstrates an ability to control language and





techniques, to tell an interesting story, and to analyse and interpret the 'cristero' conflict. Dialogue is used to depict the speech and attitudes of the lower, social classes, a device illustrated in one peon's incisive summary of 'cristero' motives: "Te digo que son como los borregos; por onde brinca uno, brincan todos. No les importa saber si van bien armados, y si van a ganar o a perder; la cuestión es saber si va fulano o zutano pa que ellos enluegito vayan; y a más de todo, tú sabes el respeto y la obediencia que tienen por los padrecitos" (p. 38). In many respects, Anda's skill as a narrator and his style of writing recall the novels of José Rubén Romero. This is especailly true of his ability to present the black humour inherent in aspects of Mexican life and its pretences. One example is his blunt assessment of the 'cristero' factions. The 'cristero' leader, 'el padre Vega', "no iba a defender la Doctrina de Cristo; iba a hacer la lucha para llegar a Obispo, Canónigo, o cuando menos a Cura de un curato mejor; ya no quería seguir soterrado en aquel mísero villorio" (p. 114). By contrast, the established church leaders, "los clérigos, curas, canónigos, y obispos que disfrutaban de comodidades y dinero, no se habían levantado jamás, ni se levantarán. No tenían por qué" (p. 115).

Although virtually every other 'cristero' novelist attempted to maintain a level of literary and linguistic merit in his work, Sierra Madrigal openly rejected such 'lofty' ideals:

Esta historia va a buscar intencionalmente a los



lectores de la mayoría, al pueblo mismo, representado por los hombres humildes i de poca instrucción; a los que nada saben de bellezas literarias, ni de preciosidades de estilo; a los que no pueden explicarse las cosas que ven, las cosas que suceden, i apenas si presienten con su instinto, la causa de los sucesos. Por mi voluntad, me esforzaré en acomodar a la historia que sigue, una manera sencilla de expresarme, hasta donde me sea posible, porque deseo ser comprendido por todos i no busco éxitos académicos, ni sonrisas, ni elogios de los críticos, sino de los mexicanos que no están acostumbrados a un lenguaje elevado. (La Madre Conchita, p. 3)

Despite this assertion, Madrigal's novel is not written in a clear, simple style, but is a rhetorical exercise, intent upon converting the reader to his personal bias. In this case, linguistic and artistic considerations were entirely secondary.

Documentation of the 'cristero' uprising was not limited to the novel. Understandably, the newspapers also recorded the events of the period and supported the faction that most closely represented their own point of view. The standard-bearer among the 'cristero' newspapers was Omega, an emphatically reactionary and anti-Revolutionary daily, whose columns and editorial pages railed against Obregón, Protestantism, and the Schismatic Church.<sup>12</sup> On February 5, 1926, its front-page headline declared: "A la lucha los CATOLICOS SINCEROS"; on March 5th of the same year, it proclaimed, "EL GOBIERNO INCITA A LOS CATOLICOS AL MOTIN Y LA REBELION". Even the pages reserved for lighter news and general interest articles echoed the ideals and opinions of the 'cristeros': a short story published on February 4, 1926,





was based on the theme, "Dios es Amor, y la mujer la que encierra en su ser la chispa santa de ese divino fuego en toda su pureza"; the 'folletín' selected for publication in March of 1926 was an anti-liberal, anti-masonic novel, Mauricio, el ajusticiado o una persecución masónica,<sup>13</sup> written by Lorenzo Elizaga.

In contrast to the fervent belligerence of the 'cristero' press, the pro-Revolutionary, pro-government newspapers sought to attenuate the extent and effects of the uprising by minimizing coverage in daily news reports. El Universal typified this by habitually referring to the conflict as "el asunto religioso". There were occasions, however, when significant developments in the 'cristero' struggle elicited stronger reactions, one such case being the attack which took place in April of 1927 on a passenger train bound for Guadalajara. Excelsior published a factual account of the assault and its tragic aftermath, and concluded its report with this editorial condemnation:

Como único comentario a tan dolorosos sucesos, queremos hacer notar al pueblo sensato de la República, y muy especialmente a las clases menesterosas, que tan bárbaramente fueron quemados vivos por esta gavilla clerical, la clase de nivel moral que tienen los que quieren constituirse en directores espirituales de nuestra nación y apoderarse del poder, cosa que, por otra parte, no es de extrañar, pues sólo se trata de una repetición exacta de los procedimientos que siempre ha usado la Iglesia Católica, desde la Inquisición hasta nuestros días. (April 29, 1927, p. 1)

It is clear that there was a striking coincidence of style and tone between novelists and journalists when both expressed



similar, partisan views. Nonetheless, the relationship is not evident in 'cristero' literature as a whole since journalists generally limited themselves to the role of recording events, in accordance with the newspaper's duty to inform, while novelists attempted a more conceptual assessment of the era, synthesizing the principles of their own faction and specifying the faults of the opposition forces. In addition, the newspapers provided a factual chronicle of contemporary history, while the novelists tended to modify the facts of objective reality to ensure the thematic and narrative cohesiveness of their compositions. Also, in contrast to novelists of the Revolution, 'cristero' novelists did not complement their literary vocation by working in journalism as well (see Appendix A).

It is interesting to note that 'cristero' novelists, unlike those of the Revolution, generally did not refer to daily journalism in their works, nor did they exploit quotation from the newspaper as a part of their technique. Jorge Gram was the one major exception, but, decidedly, he does not attest to any journalistic influence in his literary work. Gram was essentially a writer of literature, with a background in literature and an appreciation of artistic techniques. Consequently, the style and content of his novels were not derived from journalism, but rather from the sentimental, didactic mode of the last third of the XIXth century. It was not his purpose to provide an objective record of the 'cristero' rebellion, but to convey his own concept of specific events of the religious war in Mexico, a purpose which he furthered even





to the extent of direct authorial comment and declamation of 'cristero' principles. Although he readily acknowledged his debt to history, his true objectives were to portray the ordeal of Mexican Catholics from the 'Porfirista' period onward and to chastise the Federal government, the 'callistas', the Revolution, and the betrayal of the 'cristero' movement by wealthy Catholics.<sup>14</sup> Gram interspersed a significant number of quotations from newspapers in his novels, but used the device to meet very specific motives and thematic purposes. In Héctor, for example, he described the 'cristero' attack on the passenger train near Guadalajara in 1927 by combining his own fictional account with that reported in the newspaper. Because these passages reflect the 'cristero' bias of the novel, glorify the religious commitment of the protagonist, and justify the violent consequences of the attack, historical veracity is sacrificed in favour of a nobler, less brutal impression of the guerrilla action. Gram's purpose in quoting a fictitious, government news release vilifying the 'cristeros' and their exploits was to demonstrate that the pro-Revolutionary press published nothing but lies and exaggerations. He endeavoured to emphasize their deceit and faithlessness as an example of the perfidy of the government and its harassment of the Catholics. Since Gram's own, fictional account supposedly relates the true particulars of the affair, the reader is presumably able to judge the integrity of 'cristero' motivations for himself. The newspapers certainly did denounce 'cristero' atrocities, but they based their condemnation on verified data and eye-witness reports (see



Appendix F), and did not simply publish empty tirades founded on factional prejudices. It is interesting to note that the historical accuracy of Héctor is further diminished by the fact that Gram dates the attack in January, 1927, even though the actual event occurred on April 19, 1927. This discrepancy is necessary to satisfy the priorities of thematic development since the new date coincides with a crucial point in the spiritual development of the protagonist and his espousal of the 'cristero' cause.

The composition of Madrigal's La Madre Conchita shortly after the events on which it is based would seem to provide an excellent possibility for a closer relationship between fiction and the newspaper. However, even here, any relationship is markedly lacking. The use of a journalistic style did not accord with Madrigal's objectives and would not adequately convey the essence of his partisan views. The technique chosen by Madrigal, as a means of praising the Revolution and condemning the reactionary activities of the 'cristeros', was to embody the fundamental principles of the opposing factions in the figure of their leaders. Accordingly, Obregón, as the spiritual successor of Francisco Madero and the prototype of the post-Revolutionary politician, symbolized the best of the Revolution and the true hope of the nation. By contrast, 'madre Conchita', in whom the Catholic band is personified, was the epitome of religious fanaticism and reactionary extremism and typified the vice and degeneracy of the Catholic Church.

The other 'cristero' novelists rejected journalistic





influences for the same reason as Madrigal. Quite simply, the style and objectives of journalism did not accord with the essential purpose of justifying partisan theses or of providing simple entertainment for the reader. The practices of the 'cristero' writers therefore contrasted sharply with those of many of the novelists of the Revolution. However, there is one interesting counterpoint to the use of newspapers in Fernando Robles' La virgen de los cristeros. Here, journalism, as an informative medium, cedes its role to radio news reports, reflecting the protagonist's strong belief in the superiority of modern, scientific innovation. This technique parallels the use of newspaper quotations among novelists of the Revolution, serving to advance the plot and provide supplementary information related to the novel's themes. This practice can also be taken as an illustration of the fact that it was not the journalistic, informative style *per se* that was of interest to writers, but rather the role such elements might serve in the development of plot and the corroboration of themes.

In summary, the relationship between the 'cristero' novel and journalism is limited to matters of theme and content and does not extend to style and form. Even this relationship, however, is the consequence of the prevalence of comparable, political points of view expressed in newspaper editorials and through the partisan rhetoric of novelists. 'Cristero' novelists generally rejected the role as chroniclers of the rebellion and



its day to day development. They left such matters to journalists and historians and concentrated either on evaluating the exploits and principles of the various factions, or on writing light, amenable novels in response to the demands and preferences of a vast proportion of their public. Their dissociation from the objective of recording history, and their limited relationship with journalism contrast sharply with the correspondence established earlier between the newspaper and the novel of the Revolution, a phenomenon that may be regarded as further distinguishing the 'cristero' novel from that of the Revolution, even though it is conventionally held to be part of the same movement.





## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The designation 'cristero' derived from the rebels' slogan and war cry, "¡Viva Cristo Rey!".

<sup>2</sup>Although Protestant denominations did not exercise much influence in Mexico, they indicated a willingness to abide by the Government's decrees, and voiced their opinion in their official weekly publication, El Mundo Cristiano (a 'periódico evangélico interdenominacional'). On January 18, 1926, the editorial commentary established a neutral stand in relation to the controversy raging between the Government and the Catholic Church as a result of the ceremonies performed by the Apostolic Nuncio, Monseigneur Philippi, on the Cerro de Cubilete. Nonetheless, it did favour the Government somewhat: "...ellos [los católicos] pueden hacer todo lo que quieran, por más que eso de proclamar a Cristo Rey de México, mediante ceremonias más o menos elaboradas, nos parece una ocurrencia romanista y nada más" (p. 35). The same edition also proclaimed the need for "una completa libertad religiosa", but always within the limits of legal requirements and without giving the Roman Catholic Church any favoured position.

<sup>3</sup>Octavio Barreda, "Prólogo" to J. G. de Anda's Los cristeros, 2nd edition (México: Cía. General Editores, 1941), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>"La narración cristera...se basa hondamente en la historia de México, y por eso, con frecuencia adquiere valor de documento; ya que eso la lleva más allá del simple relato intrascendente. Además el tema en sí desenvuelve aspectos políticos, sociales y aun psicológicos entretnejidos, no pocas veces con gran habilidad sobre un fondo costumbrista" (Frank Gelskey, "Las novelas cristeras de Jorge Gram", Masters Thesis, Summer School, UNAM, 1957, p. 110).

<sup>5</sup>Although their plots did not document history, many novelists demonstrated a decidedly partisan commitment towards the events of the conflict. F. L. Gelskey, "La literatura cristera, después de Jorge Gram" (Doctoral Thesis, UNAM, México, 1958), listed three categories of 'cristero' novelists: ardently pro-'cristero' writers (apart from Jorge Gram there were Fernando Robles, Jesús Goytortúa Santos, Alberto Quiroz, Luis Rivero del Val, Jaime Randd, who used the pen name Eloy Azcué, and one unidentified novelist who wrote under the pseudonym 'Spectator'); writers with a certain 'cristero' bias (Carlos María Heredia, S.J., Francisco López Manjarrés, Severo García, and one other with the pseudonym, Claudio Álvarez); and the anti-'cristero' novelists (José Guadalupe de Anda and Aurelio Robles Castillo). Many of the novelists mentioned by Gelskey never published their works, but the author had the opportunity to study their manuscripts and to talk personally with many of them. As a result, his thesis contains a great deal of





significant and unique data for a true assessment of the movement.

<sup>6</sup>Unsigned preface to the first edition of Héctor, 1930; our reference is from the eighth edition (México: Editorial Jus, 1975), p. vii.

<sup>7</sup>The realism of Anda's language is reflected both in the mannerisms of speech of the characters and in his description of the environment in the terms of his characters' conception of it. A nearly-dry stream, for example, is described as "un arroyuelo de aguas turbias cuyo raudal no es mayor a la orinada de una burra preñada" (Los cristeros, p. 219).

<sup>8</sup>Dessau related Anda's style to that of Azuela: "La técnica de Anda se aproxima a la de las primeras obras de Azuela, en las cuales lo auténtico están [sic] tan intrincadamente entrelazado con lo imaginario que resulta prácticamente imposible separarlos. Sin duda, Guadalupe de Anda conocía Los de abajo, por lo menos; pero también es indudable que no podía estar mayormente informado de los procedimientos literarios de Azuela. Antes bien, debe verse en su tratamiento del material auténtico una típica variante de aquella arraigada tradición de la narrativa mexicana de la cual surgió, asimismo, gran parte de las primeras obras de Azuela" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 351).

<sup>9</sup>On this basis, Octavio Barrera's assessment of the novel was correct: "Es natural que, si aceptamos desde un principio este modo de escribir--la especie, no debemos extrañarnos al no encontrar en la obra de Anda los problemas, métodos o motivos propios de otras especies de narración novelística, tales como la decantada hondura psicológica; la reflexión de los personajes llevada a extremos; la redondez o volumen de éstos; ni tampoco la exuberancia en dibujos de trama, argumento o ritmos entre parte y parte de la obra; y mucho menos la detención o especialización del tiempo a la manera de un Proust. Las virtudes son otras ya que los propósitos son también otros" ('Prólogo', Los cristeros, pp. 12-13).

<sup>10</sup>Manuel Pedro González, Trayectoria de la novela en México (México: Ed. Botas, 1951), p. 310.

<sup>11</sup>A few, select examples are sufficient to demonstrate Gram's techniques. The use of classical references is immediately evident in the name of the protagonist, Héctor; he and his wife Consuelo are also referred to as celestial beings and in religious terms. Catholics in general are treated similarly, as in the symbolism of five dead 'cristeros': "...fueron colocados los cinco cadáveres. Dos mujeres: la inocencia y la debilidad; dos campesinos: la pobreza y el trabajo; un sacerdote: el amor" (Héctor, p. 123). Sentimentalism is a predominant characteristic in both novels, and is well





demonstrated in the first description of the love between the protagonists: "Enmudecieron aquellos labios de ángel... Después Héctor y Consuelo se confundieron en una amplia caricia... Lolita, testigo impasible de aquel coloquio de querubines, sólo escuchó un suavísimo 'batir de alas', un dulcísimo 'rumor de besos'..." (p. 196). By the same token, in Jahel, the Christian, 'cristero' family is praised as, "¡Margarita, Arturo, Marilú! ¡Tres jirones de un mismo corazón! ¡Tres víctimas de un mismo crimen! ¡Tres glorias de una misma patria!" (p. 275).

<sup>12</sup>The federal government, under President Cardenas, sought to found a national, Roman Catholic church, the 'Iglesia Nacional Mexicana'. The government was abetted to this end by the 'patriarca' Pérez, a breakaway priest who declared himself head of the Mexican, schismatic church and occupied one of the churches in Mexico City. The move naturally evoked strong reaction from conservative Roman Catholics.

<sup>13</sup>The attitude and criticism of Omega was not benignly tolerated by the Government; the paper's director was arrested and the publication of the newspaper suspended early in 1926. The second period of publication began on September 10, 1926, but without any evident change of policy, as indicated in the editorial promise to continue fighting against "todas las inmoralidades, injusticias, atropellos, infamias y demás en que han abundado los regimenes revolucionarios, a partir del carrancismo inolvidable hasta los gloriosos días corrientes..." (p. 1).

<sup>14</sup>This propensity to view and evaluate everything in accordance with his personal prejudices is exemplified in his summary of the Revolution and its leaders: "Entre el manípulo de caudillejos sobresalían los famosos generales, naturalmente generales de la revolución, perfectamente identificados y comprometidos con ella, quienes, si no eran todos famosos por su analfabetismo, sí lo eran, casi en su totalidad, por la bajeza de su vida pública y privada" (Héctor, p. 18).



## VI

### The Novel after 1940

In his analysis of Mexican literature of the XIXth and XXth centuries, José Luis Martínez examined the concept that it was characterized by a fundamental duality throughout its evolution. He identified the classical and traditionalist writings of the XIXth century as one particular tendency, and traced its development into the XXth century when it merged with avant-garde trends that derived from the innovations and techniques of foreign literature. By contrast, the second part of the duality he identified entailed a fundamental analysis of national customs and concerns, and was usually quite populist in orientation. In the XIXth century, this tendency encompassed both realist and naturalist compositions and the works of popular writers, which evolved in the XXth century into the novels of the Revolution and other politically committed works of that period.<sup>1</sup>

If Martínez's concept of Mexican literature is projected beyond 1940, his general notions retain their validity. This is not to say that all writers can be irrevocably categorized in one trend or another, nor that they were incapable of artistic innovation and initiative. In fact, as John Brushwood indicated,





the period after 1940 witnessed the inception of new directions in novel writing:

Very gradually and subtly the novel probed more deeply into the meaning of the Mexican circumstance. A few books made understanding of the individual primary, and relegated the external social facts to a secondary position; but the common procedure was still to examine the new Mexico and to place people within the scene. The novel was hesitant: there was very little experimentation, yet the need to observe and describe was losing the intensity that characterized it ten years earlier. (Mexico in Its Novel, p. 22)

Slowly, major novelists began to experiment with new techniques in dealing with their subject matter. Their works were the product of several creative stimuli, especially recent literary trends, pressing social concerns, and the demands of the modern reading public.<sup>2</sup> Although novelists were faced with a wide variety of options in their treatment of themes, virtually all of them shared the common principle of examining the Revolution and the way in which it was reflected in the national consciousness. On this basis, the writers can be divided into three general categories: those who wrote popular, entertaining narratives and exploited the revolutionary conflict merely as appropriate background; those that developed their novels along traditional lines, but made use of their text in order to analyse contemporary Mexico and to compare the outcome of the struggle with its initial ideals and objectives; and those, principally the leading novelists of the new generation, who adopted the most recent literary techniques in the composition of novels which, while undertaking an examination of modern



society, acquired considerable merit as literature.

The novelists of the first group, the popular writers, were, in general, second rate authors whose main concern was to produce light, pleasing stories with mass appeal. For this reason, plot and narrative form were complementary to the objective of entertaining through a story which usually recounted the ordeal and romantic entanglements of one main character. Typically, these novelists rejected political commitment, and mitigated the historical connotations of their work through recourse to several techniques. Their protagonists were generally fictitious, in order not to embody the career of any specific revolutionary, and history was incorporated only as a necessary adjunct to the action of the novel, which was not intended to serve as a verifiable documentation of any historical period.

Among the most outstanding of this group of novelists were Miguel N. Lira (La escondida, 1947) and Jesús Goytórtua (Lluvia roja, 1947). Typically, the action in their novels is placed in periods of armed combat during the Revolutionary struggle. Yet, there is an almost total lack of evaluation of the ideologies and motives of the Revolution itself. History is not incorporated in a documentary role but serves merely to precipitate the tragedy of the protagonists and to provide a suitable background for an entertaining story. Stylistically, Lira and Goytórtua avoided the direct, succinct narration and episodic techniques typical of the novel of the Revolution in favour of greater fluidity of action and narrative as the most





appropriate method for developing the tragic, sentimental history of their protagonists. Accordingly, both novelists sought to introduce a series of highly emotive and unexpected incidents intended to emphasize the sentimentalist tone and to further the romantic plot. As a result of such techniques, novelists of this category are to be effectively dissociated from the novelists of the Revolution, and, at the same time, from any relationship with journalism. Moreover, in spite of the popularity they enjoyed in their time, mostly because they appealed to the easy sensibilities of less demanding readers, they are ultimately only to be considered as mediocre writers with limited innovative, literary and artistic merit.<sup>3</sup>

The second group of novelists, those who wrote conventionally linear narratives, developed as a single, unified story rising to a climax, generally analysed modern Mexico and discussed current social concerns. The later novels of Mariano Azuela and those of Luis Spota are the most representative works of this group. Typically, these writers evaluated the progress of the nation against the ideals of the Revolution and examined the social and political problems of post-Revolutionary society. Both Azuela and Spota were capable, original writers who skillfully depicted the essence of the Mexican scene with all its shortcomings and possibilities. Their characters were generally well described and their plots realistically developed to tell a story that would interest and entertain as well as inform the reader. Their novels could never be designated as mere documentary records nor their style classified as



journalistic. Certainly, many of the same ideas, concerns and opinions expressed in their novels were paralleled in the editorial pages of newspapers. However, this relationship does not represent any interaction between the two genres. Rather, it reflects a general awareness throughout the nation of pressing social and political conditions. Different writers, publishing in diverse prose media, might view problems from comparable perspectives, but the similarity did not indicate a uniformity of style among the authors. The work of Luis Spota is ample illustration of this point.

Much of Spota's prose can be classified into two main categories, since, as a professional writer, he was both a novelist and a newspaper reporter. This fact is significant when evaluating his style since, unlike the majority of other modern novelists, whose role in journalism was usually limited to contributing literary and editorial articles, Spota also worked in the daily, news-gathering operations of journalism. His knowledge of the newspaper is clearly evident in Murieron a mitad del río (1948), a novel which makes use of quotations from the newspaper as part of its narrative technique. However, the device is used for specific purposes, namely, to provide additional information pertinent to the plot and to attest to the suffering and discrimination experienced by the 'wetbacks', both in the United States and in Mexico. It is important to note that the use of newspaper extracts is only one way in which this information is provided, since it is also corroborated through the conversations and reminiscences of the 'wetbacks' as they





relate their experiences and difficulties.<sup>4</sup> In reality, the stylistic characteristics evident in Spota's novels do not reflect his vocation as a journalist: the length and sustained unity given the novels contrast clearly with the direct, succinct reporting of the dailies; the critical evaluations and the careful development of plot obviate any relationship with the objective, informative intent of news reports; and, most importantly, Spota's literary style does not bear witness to his journalistic training.

The third category of writers, which includes the artistic, innovative novelists of the new generation, has achieved the most outstanding successes in modern, Mexican prose. Among this group, Agustín Yáñez, Juan Rufo and José Revueltas were instrumental in establishing a new course for Mexican literature and in bringing about an unprecedented international recognition. The novelists pursued a dual thematic focus. They concentrated on the social and political circumstances of the nation in the Revolutionary period, and, at the same time, by examining the psychological motivations of his existence and interaction with society, on the role of the individual in modern Mexico. Technique was also important to their work and, to this end, they adopted all the contemporary innovations of their art, including flashbacks, interior monologue and the disruption of the chronological sequence of events.<sup>5</sup> Although all the novelists in this group dealt with aspects of the Revolution and its consequences, their style had little in common with the direct narrative and linear



development of plot found in earlier works. Rather, they portrayed reality as a projection of the individual's subconscious and psychological awareness, identifiable by his response to contemporary society and his personal reaction to external conditions. Consequently, novelists sought to establish a balance between literature as pure art and as writing committed to serving a social function; in this, they were successful, for they provided a unique analysis of contemporary Mexican reality while yet creating works of outstanding literary merit.

The style and thematic content evolved by writers such as Yáñez and Rulfo did not represent completely new developments in Mexican literature, having derived from several preceding movements. The intense focus on the ideals and consequences of the social struggle had been established previously by the novelists of the Revolution, and the 'vanguardista' style is, in part, to be traced to the 'estridentista' and 'contemporáneos' writers. Both these latter movements were essentially parallels of European trends prevalent after the First World War, namely, 'ultraísmo', 'creacionismo', surrealism, futurism, cubism and dadaism.<sup>6</sup> These artistic movements were generally best expressed through the media of poetry and painting; however, they also attained a degree of significance in prose compositions.

Manuel Maples Arce was the first to promote 'estridentismo' in Mexico, and published his 'Primer Manifiesto' (1921) as a statement of a new aesthetic theory:

La verdad estética es tan sólo un estado de





emoción incoercible, desarrollado en un planto extravasal de equivalencia integralista. Las cosas no tienen valor intrínseco posible y su equivalencia poética florece en sus relaciones y coordinaciones, las que se manifiestan en su sector interno, más emocionante y más definitiva que una realidad desmantelada. Para hacer una obra de arte es preciso crear y no copiar. Nosotros buscamos la verdad en la realidad pensada y no en la realidad aparente. Todo debe ser superación y equivalencia...<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with these precepts, 'estridentistas' sought to create a completely new literary formula, manipulating artistic and poetic resources to evoke and describe purely subjective impressions. Their techniques, essentially borrowed from European models, included the use of concrete words, oniric impressions, abrupt changes of perspective and place, and images of emptiness, solitude and mechanical devices. Theme and content were often nationalistic and reflected a strong awareness of current social and political concerns.

The compositions of the 'estridentistas' can be divided into two general categories on the basis of their writing style. There were the poets, such as Manuel Maples Arce, Arqueles Vela and Germán List Arzubide, who produced the major portion of 'estridentista' compositions, and the novelists, primarily Mariano Azuela and Xavier Icaza, who contributed less to the movement, but whose works still had an important impact on Mexican literature.<sup>8</sup> The two groups were not exclusive, since several of the poets also wrote prose. However, their novels tended to be significantly shorter, with an emphasis on aesthetic effect, and with careful attention to the stylistic and technical precepts of the movement. The novels of Arqueles



Vela (El café de nadie, 1926, and La señorita Etc., 1926) exemplify their production and the use of techniques such as flashback, the arbitrary juxtaposition of events without consideration of chronology, the alteration of narrative voices, accumulation of images and subjective impressionism used to reveal collective, human psychology.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, prose writers such as Azuela and Icaza who confined themselves specifically to the novel, manifested a greater consciousness of current national concerns and the social reality of the post-Revolutionary era. Mariano Azuela wrote three 'estridentista' novels, La malhora (1923), El desquite (1925), and La luciérnaga (written in 1927 and published in 1932). Compared with his previous works, in particular those of the Revolution, these three represent a radical change in his stylistic development. Action is a reflection of the psychological perspective of the characters, resulting in the juxtaposition of confused, personal thoughts and the rapid alternations of scenes and time sequences. Events themselves are not described but rather felt or indirectly related in response to the characters' sensitivities. Despite the technical innovations, however, Azuela's thematic focus remained consistent. He depicted the sufferings and tribulations of the masses, and recalled the ideals of the Revolution as a basis for criticizing the social and political injustice still evident under the new régimes.<sup>10</sup>

To a certain extent, the 'estridentista' novels form an intermediate step between the novelists of the Mexican Revolution and modern writers such as Yáñez and Rulfo.<sup>11</sup> The





'estridentistas', like the writers of the Revolution, committed themselves to social and political analysis, but evinced a greater appreciation of prose as an artistic and literary form. Modern novelists used the same approach as a basis for their own style, but went beyond previous initiatives and, with greater literary success, focused more closely on the plight of the individual in society.

If the 'estridentista' compositions are compared to journalism, it is hardly surprising that there is no obvious stylistic relationship. The preeminently literary and artistic approach of the novelists, particularly that of poetic writers such as Vela and List Arzubide, effectively eliminate any possible correspondence between the two genres. Similarly, their aesthetic perspective, concentration on the most intimate of human experiences, and their preferences for expressing a subjective reality diminish the possibility of any correlation with the content and style of daily journalism. The distinctions are not quite so absolute in the case of novelists such as Azuela and Icaza. Many of their social and political themes paralleled the content of newspaper editorials, as, for example, Azuela's discussion of social conditions in the capital (Regina Landa, 1939, and Nueva burguesía, 1941) and Icaza's assessment of the problems stemming from the development of Mexico's oil industry (Panchito Chapapote, 1928). Nonetheless, even this relationship is minimal, and is not in any sense the product of a common artistic form or writing technique, since, by this period, such novelists avoided the principles of objective,



informative reporting in order to comply with literary and aesthetic principles in the composition of works of art with relevant thematic implications.

The works of the 'contemporáneos' appeared at nearly the same time as those of the 'estridentistas', and responded, like theirs, to European influences of the post-war period. However, as John Brushwood indicated, fundamental differences existed between the two movements:

The writers of both groups knew that the literature of a static society would have to change when movement replaced inertia. Both groups were influenced by European literature, but the 'contemporáneos' were more critical. They were not inclined to accept the new simply because it was new, but to consider its artistic validity.

To a certain extent, of course, the 'estridentistas' understood the relationship of art and revolution but they joined it with sociological and political concern. The 'contemporáneos', on the other hand, were committed to art as more basic than either sociology or politics. And they guarded art jealously against the intrusion of propaganda. They were bitterly criticized by writers who wanted to use literature as a means of promoting social justice. (*Mexico in Its Novel*, p. 194)<sup>12</sup>

As a group, the 'contemporáneos' were never a cohesive, literary movement; the term was applied broadly to all writers who contributed to the literary magazine *Contemporáneos* (1928-1931). Notwithstanding, its members did share certain common objectives and criteria, namely, the desire to produce Mexican poetry of a high standard equal to that of European writers, to be well versed in foreign literature, particularly that of Europe, in





order to increase its acceptance, and to instill a sense of national pride in Mexican culture and its accomplishments. Although these objectives provided a basic unity, each author wrote in accordance with his personal artistic and aesthetic principles. Chief among the 'contemporáneos' writers were Octavio G. Barreda, Enrique González Rojo, José Gorostiza, Bernardo Ortiz de Montellanos, Gilberto Owen, Carlos Pellicer, Jaime Torres Bodet, Xavier Villaurrutia and Salvador Novo.

Although the best achievements of the 'contemporáneos' were in poetry, these writers also produced a number of significant prose works. The most outstanding of these novelists were Salvador Novo, Xavier Villaurrutia, Gilberto Owen and Jaime Torres Bodet, writers who are relatively important in the development of the Mexican novel:

The 'contemporáneos' were poets. The amount of prose fiction they wrote was slight, but it dominated the fiction of the last half of the 1920's, and plays a role in the Mexican novel far out of proportion to its quantity or even to its intrinsic structure. They were rich in style and in sensitivity. Obviously, the authors were interested in probing the human condition in order to see a deeper reality than was visible in their social environment. (John Brushwood, Mexico in Its Novel, p. 195)

As for stylistic technique,

...the novels may be described as psychological. ...in the avant-garde novels of the 1920's, the authors enter the characters in a kind of soul-participation. They use a great deal of imagery, much of it based on unusual associations that approach synesthesia. They use free association, dreams, and the displacement of time. Partly technique and partly theme is their persistent interest in things of their own time: advertisements, movie stars, makes of



automobiles and the like. (J. Brushwood,  
Mexico in Its Novel, pp. 195-196)

The emphasis on the psychological, mirrored through the personal tragedy, intimate reflections and introspection on the part of the characters, significantly reduced the importance of conventional narration and plot development, so much so that Antonio Castro Leal viewed the novels of the 'contemporáneos' as "confesiones personales, en ambientes neutros, descoloridos, imaginarios" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, Vol. II, p. 20). The novelists also exploited more recent literary innovations, in particular, interior monologue, chronological displacement of events, and use of subjective and oniric elements. As an expression of their fascination with universal knowledge, they included abundant cultural, literary, mythological and erudite references.<sup>13</sup>

In reality, the term 'novelist' is applied loosely when it refers to the prose compositions of the 'contemporáneos', since only Jaime Torres Bodet actually conformed to the accepted, traditional precepts of the genre. His earlier novels, especially Margarita de niebla (1927) and La educación sentimental (1929), figure within the 'contemporáneos' movement and clearly reflect the prevalent style and techniques of the group, particularly in the use of lyric and poetic elements, the novelty of his images and the emphasis on psychology. Torres Bodet also stressed other elements essential to the novel, namely that it entertain the reader, and that it present an analysis of contemporary social reality in Mexico. On this





basis, Torres Bodet was not only an aesthetic writer but also a committed one who endeavoured to examine the nature of human existence and its meaning for the individual, and, at the same time, to apply his observations on the broader, social scale of life in Mexico as a whole.

The style used in 'contemporáneos' literature was, in the main, dictated by principles of creative and aesthetic composition. The novelists of this group, therefore, showed no desire to provide an objective documentation of actual social conditions and historical events, and refused to become embroiled in the political sectarianism so frequently evident in journalism. In fact, it appears that the 'contemporáneos' novelists might have overlooked the newspaper and its informative function altogether, were it not for the fact that it offended their literary ethics so strongly, especially in its harshly impersonal narration and often crude description of events. Salvador Novo was typical of the 'contemporáneos' view:

Esto [el periodismo] ya no lo pueden leer las familias. Tampoco debería saberse si fulano mató a 'su amante'. ¿Qué tiene que saber mi esposa que puede matar a su amante? Y luego los niños que aprenden historia, y en los diarios leen, de reojo, que en la cárcel..... heroína... drogas... Si no fuera por el suplemento de los domingos, tan 'instructivo', las gentes que usan planillas no comprarían el periódico entre semana. (El joven, p. 4)

Likewise, Gilberto Owen contrasted the novelists' polished literary style and their commitment to personal, poetic impressions of reality to techniques adopted by newspapermen:

Los fotógrafos ajustan a su Kodak lentes convexos y cóncavos, para perpetuar la escena lo menos



fielmente posible, y los reporteros de los grandes diarios, que ya conocía yo de vista, aprestar unos voluminosos cuadernos de entre cuyas hojas salta, como una flor romántica de entre las de un libro de versos, la verdad disecada, aplastada, que ellos ponen a inflar como un globo de goma plástica, pintarrajeado, desfigurado. (*Llama fría*, p. 142)

The criticism was particularly apt, for the trend in contemporary journalism was to feature the most sensationalist news of the day, complementing it with brutally graphic illustrations intended to appeal to popular preferences. As a consequence, the literature of the 'contemporáneos' and the informative accounts of the newspapers were too far apart in style and intent to permit any functional relationship to exist between them.

The modern novelists took the most appropriate elements of style and theme from the preceding movements and amalgamated them with their own literary precepts. The result was a decidedly new period in the Mexican novel. The writers, who had no first hand experience of the Revolution, viewed the effects of the struggle in retrospect. They evaluated and interpreted its outcome from a more egalitarian and objective perspective and related the past to the nation's present and future.<sup>14</sup> They were also concerned with analysing and understanding the complexities of the Mexican identity. To achieve this, they focused on the individual, examining his self-awareness, and the ways in which he interacted with his environment and society.





Such analyses provided for an examination of the internal motivations and psychological crises of the character rather than an account of any specific sequence of factual events, a formula which accounts for the diminished emphasis on external action. In order to accomplish and enhance their thematic development, the modern novelists adopted all the most innovative prose techniques, including multiple points of view, counterpoint, flashback and chronological displacement. They also stressed control of language to obtain subtle nuances and give new meaning to jaded concepts. As a result, the literature they produced was hermetic, accessible only to the minority of readers able to understand and appreciate the new techniques and social concerns. Furthermore, the reader himself now became a more essential component of the writer's creation, since the novel's worth and acceptance depended on the reader's ability to reconstruct the diverse elements into a cohesive and meaningful whole. Despite the difficulties inherent in the composition of such works, especially on account of its psychological analyses and avant-garde techniques, modern novelists succeeded in producing a literature of acknowledged superiority in comparison with earlier works. The year generally accepted as that which marks the beginning of the contemporary novel in Mexico is 1947, the year of publication of Agustín Yáñez's Al filo del agua.

Although certain aspects of content and theme in the more modern novels were comparable with those of the Revolution, this basis for comparison does not extend to the 'journalistic' style attributed to the novels of the Revolution. By the 1940's, both



journalism and the novel had become two, clearly distinct genres. Accordingly, newspapers existed as a medium for informative, objective reporting of news. Even the editorials, which previously had frequently provided the basis for some stylistic correlation between journalists and novelists, were reserved for pertinent social commentary or, alternatively, had disappeared altogether, as was the case in the sensationalist tabloids and similar second rate newspapers. The almost complete dissociation between the two prose forms is more readily evident if the stylistic standards of journalism are juxtaposed with the creative and highly literary style of critically acclaimed novelists such as Yáñez and Rulfo. The relationship can not be so categorically excluded, however, in the works of some of the secondary novelists, such as Luis Spota, where a closer coincidence of theme and subject matter remained. Even Luis Spota, however, clearly demonstrates an understanding of the literary and artistic purpose of creative composition. Since one of the fundamental tenets of our study is that aesthetic and literary objectives constitute one of the essential conditions which distinguishes the novel from journalism, the increasing separation between the two genres over the course of the post-Revolutionary period can be seen as the natural consequence of stylistic and technical developments within both genres. At the same time, the editorial problems that had formerly prompted novelists to look for a solution to their difficulties by publication in the pages of the newspaper, and which had maintained some relationship between the two genres, had also





been remedied. Improvements in the publishing industry and the stylistic development of the novel did not prevent novelists from continuing to collaborate with the special sections of the newspapers, any more that it deterred journalists from attempting to write novels. However, both novelists and journalists were well versed in the fundamental characteristics of the two prose forms, and accepted the specific precepts and objectives that governed their production. As a consequence, the relationship between journalism and the novel diminished increasingly in the second quarter of the XXth century, and is almost non-existent among contemporary novelists.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Martínez's concepts are discussed in La literatura mexicana del siglo XX, Part 1, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup>The trends to be examined in this chapter do not constitute the total output of novelists during this period. Previous tendencies, such as the colonialist novel (Artemio del Valle-Arizpe) and the 'cristero' novel (Alberto Quiroz, Cristo rey, 1952) continued to attract writers. There were also other very popular types of compositions such as detective stories and the novel of the supernatural. One of the most celebrated writers in the latter vein was Rafael Bernal (Un muerto en la tumba, 1946, and Su nombre era muerte, 1947).

<sup>3</sup>Boyd Carter was somewhat excessive in his evaluation of these novelists, particularly of Miguel Lira. In his appraisal of La escondida he stated, "The psychological motivations, the magnificent evocatory animation of the dialogue, the rhythmical balance of the sentences, the discriminating selection of episodes and settings, the interlarding of folklore, and the judicious interweaving of fact and fiction give this novel an artistic equilibrium and poetic freshness that are unique in the Mexican novels..." ("The Mexican Novel at Mid-Century", Prairie Schooner, Vol. XXVIII, No 2, Summer, 1954, p. 151). A more just assessment of the novel's worth must also stress the emphasis placed on the love plot, not so much to create a poetic atmosphere as to highlight the sentimental and entertaining aspects of the work. Furthermore, Lira's attempts to use artistic devices, particularly contrast and symbolism, is more artificial than convincing. Such elements as he does develop appear to be there to ensure the popularity of his plot.

<sup>4</sup>One such example of this cross-confirmation of information is found in the descriptions of the dangers suffered by the 'wetbacks' from people who prey on their defenseless position. This is told in a newspaper report and is 'quoted' by Spota: "Macario rebuscó entre los papeles de su cartera un recorte de periódico que luego Paván leyó en voz alta: '--El asesinato de una familia mexicana cerca de Donna se recordará, por el lujo de crueldad con que fue cometido, como unos de los peores crímenes de este año. Los criminales, procediendo con un sadismo aterrador...' --se saltó la descripción del hecho, que coincidía con la de Macario y leyó el siguiente párrafo--: 'Todo este tiene estrecha relación con la serie de crímenes que enrojecen las aguas del río Grande desde tiempo inmemorial. No hace mucho, la policía mexicoamericana, trabajando mancomunadamente, logró exterminar, aunque no del todo, a una terrible banda de asesinos que operaba en todo el río y que era manejada por un conocido médico de la ciudad mexicana de Monterrey...' (p. 91). Similar details are incorporated into the conversations of the Mexican workers: "Alguien cerca de ellos estaba relatando la historia de una muerte; la oscura historia de la muerte de Miguel Miranda, a





quien un grupo de blancos asaltó cerca de Keneddy para robarle una fortuna de cien dólares que había ahorrado después de muchos años de trabajar en los campos de Texas. --...los muy canijos, después de romperle la cara a pedrazos, lo pusieron en la vía para que la máquina lo hiciera pecadillo... --alcanzó a escuchar Paván" (p. 225).

<sup>5</sup>Adalbert Dessau confirms this new orientation in the novel at this time: "Poco después de 1940, varios autores, en su mayoría jóvenes, presentaron sus novelas, creando una situación literaria nueva. Casi todas estas obras conservaron la temática de la novela de la Revolución, pero el aspecto social quedaba en el fondo, y no era sino un pretexto para tratar problemas psicológicos" (La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 370).

<sup>6</sup>L. M. Schneider has described the relationship between the European and Mexican movements: "El estridentismo está inscrito dentro de un auténtico sistema lingüístico de vanguardia. No sólo observa una dirección de lenguaje puramente emotivo, desdenando cualquier interferencia descriptiva, sino que utiliza pirotécnicas verbales, íntimamente fusionadas con elementos que constituyen el ritmo de la historia cultural de este momento. Fija el poema por escalones de imágenes y metáforas, por lo general de raíz cubista, yuxtapuestas, pero motivadas todas por una sola idea. Por medio de un acendrado subjetivismo, que muchas veces conduce a un desarraigo, al derrotismo o a un estado de soledad, crea atmósferas que están más sugeridas que declaradas. Nuevas formas sintácticas, búsqueda incesante de una musicalidad, y un vértigo espiritual que se produce por el cultivo excesivo de los sentidos, completan el proceso técnico de la imagen estridentista" (El estridentismo, México: Ediciones de Bellas Artes, 1970, pp. 206-207).

<sup>7</sup>Manuel Maples Arce, in his manifesto "Actual número 1, hoja de vanguardia. Compromido estridentista" (1921). Ruth Stanton offered a more concrete explanation of the movement: "Estridentismo is the theory of practice in writing of freely expressing one's inner or subjective emotions and sensations. It has included interpretations of life in stylized and distorted scenes, and characters symbolic of reality, usually presented so as to reflect the subjective state of the chief character" ("The Development of Xavier Icaza as Leader in the 'Estridentista' School of Mexican Literature", Hispania, Vol. XXI, No 4, Dec., 1938, p. 271).

<sup>8</sup>Other minor members of the 'estridentista' movement included Salvador Gallardo, Moisés Mendoza, Enrique Barreiro Tablada and Miguel Aguillón Guzmán, all known for their poetry.

<sup>9</sup>An example of this style can be seen in Vela's oniric and poetic description of nightfall: "Al salir y trasponer las umbrales de la noche que va cayendo sobre la vagabundez de los transeúntes, con esa lentitud de los globos desinflados, se





vuelven a ver, huraños, descompuestos, extrañados de caminar juntos, apoyando la reciprocidad de sus emociones y sus deseos frustrados, a lo largo de la avenida encrucijada de luces" (El café de nadie, p. 18). L. M. Schneider explained Vela's style thus: "...El café de nadie condensa y precisa el tipo de prosa estridentista, que tiende a apresar una emoción intelectualizada en base de una libre asociación de imágenes líricas desde todo punto de vista y sin ninguna relación descriptiva" (El estridentismo, p. 167).

<sup>10</sup>The same themes and style were used by Xavier Icaza in Panchito Chapapote; these are particularly well exemplified in his summary of post-Revolutionary Mexico: "Sigue deshecha la vida del país. Todos sufren. Todos pierden. Lágrimas, sangre, padecer. Los jinetes trágicos cabalgan implacables. Destrucción. Ruinas. Dolor. Plagios. Siguen los préstamos forzosos. Las bolsas burguesas se vacían por la fuerza. Los militares rebeldes son insaciables. Los combates no cesan. Continua mortandad. Solamente los zopilotes medran" (pp. 83-84).

<sup>11</sup>"El desarrollo de la novela de la Revolución está en estrecha dependencia con el desarrollo de las masas revolucionarias, que entró en una nueva etapa durante la campaña electoral de Calles --quien por entonces representaba un programa nacional consecuente--, y con la lucha contra De la Huerta. A este período pertenece la entrada de una parte de los estridentistas al campo de la Revolución" (Adalbert Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, p. 261).

<sup>12</sup>"Puede observarse que...respecto a si el arte debe ser 'revolucionario'--es decir, tener un contenido social--reinaba absoluta unanimidad, tanto en la crítica a la indiferencia ante los problemas sociales, como en la que mostraron los 'Contemporáneos'. En este sentido escribe Jorge Ferretis: 'Un poeta es siempre una función social.' ...Y Carlos Gutiérrez llama a la literatura sin contenido social 'estéril rincón de biblioteca de donde sólo surgen miopías visuales adecuadas para el uso de los anteojos y reumatismos por inacción que hacen necesario el empleo de las muletas.' ...Finalmente, Xavier Icaza tilda a tales escritores de 'seres de absurda egolatría, que en medio del fragor de la lucha son capaces de encerrarse en diminuta torre de marfil, antes a quienes se les ha sacado el corazón' " (Adalbert Dessau, La novela de la Revolución Mexicana, pp. 114-115).

On the other hand, critics such as John Brushwood indicated a different type of 'revolutionary' merit in the works of the 'contemporáneos': "The 'contemporáneos' were revolutionary in three ways: theirs was part of the ebullient, sometimes explosive expression of the youth of the 1920's, they seriously intended to inject into Mexican literature the characteristics of European literature of the time, and they were dedicated to the proposition that the creative act is revolutionary by its very nature" (Mexico in Its Novel, p. 191).





<sup>13</sup>Gilberto Owen used such a style in *Llama fría* (1925): "...la temblorosa llamita de cirio en que creí simbolizarte; y he puesto mi mano sobre ella para ofrecerle el dolor de la quemadura; pero tu llama, que alumbraba, no quemaba también. ...el recuerdo de tus metamorfosis me será solamente una llama fría" (p. 150). In *Novela como nube* the surrealist technique is again repeated: "Un mozo tira la luna sobre la mesa. El hastío empieza a derramar sobre el techo la leche embotellada en el cigarro" (p. 10).

<sup>14</sup>In his analysis, *Literatura y revolución*, Fernando Alegria contrasted the presentation of reality in early writers of the XXth century to that of modern novelists who used new, artistic techniques. His evaluation is meant to cover the full spectrum of Spanish America but is particularly relevant to Mexican literature: "Obviamente, el realismo de Gallegos (el de su generación) es directo y descriptivo: formulativo. Su expresión adquiere grandeza histórica en el perfeccionamiento de una técnica pictórica: la del friso mural. El realismo de Vargas Llosa (el de su generación también) es indirecto: con él se va a la realidad por sus intersticios, no por su superficie panorámica; se busca el sentido y el orden estéticos a través del caos que nos rodea" (*Literatura y revolución*, Col. Popular 100, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1971, p. 17).



## Conclusion

In our opinion, three fundamental considerations should be taken into account before it can be concluded that the novel and journalism in Mexico are related. Firstly, there should be a similarity between the two based on their common description of the daily events of contemporary history. Yet, it must be noted that similarity on these grounds is often more apparent than real. Although novelists and journalists frequently describe the same circumstances, the point of view adopted by the novelist may actually be more akin to historical narration than to journalistic documentation. The second element is style. A relationship between the two forms can exist only when the novelist's style is direct and concise, and avoids the forms of lyrical expression which differentiate literary composition from factual reporting. The third component is theme. To relate his composition to journalism, the novelist must intend his work to be either an objective chronicle of some aspect of contemporary life, or, perhaps, a statement of his espousal of a contemporary social cause. When, by contrast, his work is formulated artistically with the intention of examining an abstraction or the human condition in general, is intended solely to entertain the reader with a pleasing story, or is undertaken principally





as a form of aesthetic expression, the relative approximation between the two genres is correspondingly diminished.

With these considerations in mind, there would seem to be greater opportunity for similarity between journalism and the novels of the Mexican Revolution than, for instance, between journalism and the more avant-garde compositions of the modernist and 'estridentista' writers. In addition to the factors to which we have referred, however, the extent of the relationship between the two forms is also affected by other elements. As a facet of literature, the novel is generally held to be a higher and more enduring form, which, for some critics, constitutes the trunk and not just a branch of prose writing. Its content, narrative structure and manner of presentation are far less restricted than in journalism. Innovative narrative techniques are therefore acceptable in a novel, but are censorable in newspaper reporting on account of the more narrowly defined social function of journalism, and its duty to record contemporary happenings succinctly and objectively. The quality of newspaper prose is generally determined by the transitory relevance of the information it conveys. By contrast, although generally requiring a much longer period of time from their inception to publication, novels often reflect a more penetrating analysis, the result, in part, of being somewhat more removed from the historical events with which they are concerned.

If we assess the relationships between the novel and journalism in Mexico between 1890 and 1940, a variety of



correlations emerge, some of a rather superficial nature, others of a more complex kind. Most immediately, the novel and journalism were significantly combined because, before that time, the majority of the writers concerned produced both novels and newspaper columns, a situation that inevitably lead to a duplication of content between the two forms. By the beginning of the 1890's, this state of affairs had resulted in a journalism with a markedly literary character, due not only to the similarity in content of the two genres, but also to the fact that writers used the newspapers as their medium of communication, aware that they were the most direct method of reaching the educated minority who would appreciate their work. This arrangement was altered radically in 1896 when Rafael Reyes Spíndola instituted North American and European standards of professional journalism and emphasized objective, impartial reporting. However, the change did not signal an immediate break with tradition since literature continued to appear in a separate section of the newspaper. In fact, from 1896 onward, it was this type of situation that characterized the relationship between the novel and the newspaper. The differences between the two genres therefore became more firmly established. Although individual novelists and journalists continued to contribute to both, the different conventions of the two forms were almost universally respected.

Since writers were equally conversant with the stylistic qualities and the social function of both forms, it is not surprising that some elements of one should be exploited in the





other. Significantly, however, this did not give rise to any extensive, reciprocal imitation of form or style. On the contrary, it was more a matter of each genre keeping the public informed on the state of the other. Accordingly, newspapers of the latter part of the 'Porfirista' era, and, decreasingly, those of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary years, served to keep the public abreast of new literary movements and styles by offering a regular, daily section devoted to literature, by publishing special literary supplements, and by serializing popular and classical works as 'novelas por entregas' and 'novelas de folletín'. Novelists reciprocated by interpolating extracts from newspapers in their work and by commenting on journalism's social and informative function, either as a reflection and criticism of the different types of newspapers, or as a narrative device used to advance the plot of their novel. Nonetheless, this connection between the two is largely superficial; relationships of a thematic and stylistic nature are generally more complex.

As we have indicated, thematic parallels between the novel and journalism were usually more pronounced when the two complemented each other in the description of specific, historical circumstances. However, the situation was never constant, but varied in reaction to the continually changing demands of the novel and the newspaper themselves, as well as to political tendencies in the country at large.

Novelists of the 'Porfirista' era generally constituted two categories. The first consisted of a group of major novelists,



writers who belonged to and supported the ruling oligarchy and who perceived Mexican society from a positivist point of view that testified to their belief in the 'Porfirista' system as sufficient to fulfil the national destiny. These novelists avoided any direct compromise in the nation's social and political inequalities, but preferred to entertain the reader and to offer pleasant instruction on matters such as the importance of religion and the family. The prevalence of this approach until 1920, among 'Porfirista' novelists such as Federico Gamboa and José López-Portillo y Rojas and their disciples, is indicative of its popularity and critical acceptance. The second group of novelists included many second and third rate writers who were allied with the liberal opposition. Their works dealt consistently with the social and political injustices of the oligarchical system and the serious need for reform, although it was extremely rare that their disillusion made open revolutionaries of them. As the crisis of 1910 approached, their social themes continued to stress the nation's growing discontent, yet, surprisingly, between 1910 and 1920 few novelists of this group actually reflected the changes that were taking place in Mexico.

Between 1890 and 1910, journalism was affected by the same ideological polarization. The large, important newspaper supported the established political and social order, while the smaller opposition press was under the direction of liberal intellectuals. Naturally enough, journalists and novelists who were related by their affiliation to one of the political





factions shared a common perspective, a bond further strengthened by novelists who also published articles and political commentaries in the newspapers. The changes instituted in journalism by Reyes Spíndola towards the end of the XIXth century did not alter this connection. However, newspapers no longer conveyed opinion in pseudo-literary articles but through their selection of news items and editorial commentary.

Between 1910 and 1920, journalism suffered a period of relative instability, exacerbated by the extreme factionalism of individual newspapers. Except for a loss of ascendancy by the conservative newspapers to pro-Revolutionary publications, there was little change in the fundamental division between the pro- and anti-government newspapers, which still remained after 1920 in spite of the progressive institutionalization of the Revolution. After that date, the novel and journalism coincided in evaluating the successes of the Revolutionary government and the extent of its fulfillment of promises made during the fighting. This relationship was particularly evident after the rise in popularity of the novels of the Revolution and the publication of works that were based on verifiable, historical events or were 'thesis' novels dealing with current social problems. The historical character of the former frequently led to a resemblance with the direct reporting of daily events in the newspaper; similarly, the subjective analysis and commentary on current social problems in the thesis novels often paralleled ideas and concerns expressed in contemporary newspaper editorials. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the



majority of these novels are generally considered to have relatively little artistic merit, and their focus on the Revolution is no longer sufficient to ensure their critical acceptance. They are of enduring value principally because they depict an important period in the history and social development of Mexico and because they represent a minor facet of the development of Mexican literature.

In some respects, the relationship between the novel and journalism based on their content is often purely coincidental. Unlike journalists, the novelists never intended their works solely as informative documentation and analysis, even during the periods of greatest social turmoil. Virtually every novelist tried to synthesize the important implications of contemporary history and provide a broader, often more abstract view of the Revolutionary struggle and its accompanying evolution of a sense of national identity. Thus, thematic similarities between the novel and journalism are, in the broader view, the product of the prevalence of certain questions of national concern, which equally affected poetry and drama, and did not occur as a result of direct influence among the different genres.

The relationship between the novel and journalism with regard to style is, in many respects, a reflection of conditions that govern their relationship in matters of content. In the early 1890's journalism had a quasi-literary style, due principally to the fact that articles, commentaries and editorials were contributed by writers whose production also included novels and whose literary influence on the press was





enhanced by their roles as editors and directors of individual publications. However, by the turn of the century, the innovations introduced by Reyes Spíndola caused the style of the newspaper to diverge from that of the novel. Novelists continued to be influenced by the characteristics of style associated with Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism, which, in spite of the changes brought by the Revolution, predominated until the 1920's. By contrast, journalists disassociated themselves earlier from the predominant styles of prose narrative, emulated European and North American models of news reporting, and emphasized a direct, objective style suitable to informative documentation. As revolutionary fervour increased after 1910, many newspapers sacrificed something of this style to declamatory rhetoric, but the reporting of news still constituted their main function and their style was still evaluated according to the precepts of journalism established by Reyes Spíndola.

When political tensions relaxed after the Revolution, direct accounting of daily events was emphasized once more as the predominant style. Since novelists also wished to document and evaluate the events of the Revolution and its effects on the nation, it is not surprising that their work has some affinity with the newspapers of the time. Notwithstanding its inherent diversity, the novel of the Revolution is frequently characterized by rapid, direct narration of historical events and realistic description. Many critics have attributed this style directly to the influence of journalism and have



considered it as a fundamental characteristic of all novels of the Revolution. However, this claim is belied by the works of several of the leading novelists, in particular, those of Mariano Azuela, Martín Luis Guzmán and José Rubén Romero. Although their works do have a number of elements of style in common, they surpass the limitations of journalism. Their works display significant creative and lyrical qualities, demonstrate a knowledge of the techniques of literary composition and convey a synthesis of the essence of the Revolution and its consequences to a degree not possible in the newspaper. It is true that several minor novelists of the Revolution, Diego Arenas Guzmán in La consumación del crimen and Fernando Ramírez de Aguilar in Desde el tren amarillo, for example, were more directly influenced by journalism. However, novelists of this category were either journalists by profession, who sought to record their experiences in the form of a novel, or were minor writers whose understanding of the genre was deficient. They cannot therefore be cited as effective proof that all novelists suffered from identical shortcomings, or that novelists of the Revolution were particularly susceptible to the influences of journalism.

As further demonstration that journalism was not a pervasive influence during the post-Revolutionary period, it is important to note that there were other significant prose forms written at the same time as the novels of the Revolution. The compositions of the 'contemporáneos' and 'estridentista' writers were related to the European avant-garde, and received a





critical acclaim that on occasion rated them more highly than other contemporary prose forms, the novel of the Revolution in particular. The eminently literary style of these novels is an adequate contradiction of the widely held view that the predominant style in that period of national foment during the first decades of the century was the 'journalistic' mode supposedly adopted by the novelists of the Revolution. Furthermore, the fact that the avant-garde novelists, like those of the Revolution, frequently referred to contemporary newspapers and demonstrated an awareness of their style and social role, reveals that a knowledge or even the practice of journalism did not entail a tendency to exploit its style.

In conclusion then, it is shortsighted to affirm too great a relationship between the novel and journalism. The relationships between them are almost entirely thematic in nature and derive from a common description and analysis of Mexican life and politics. With few exceptions, novelists did not emulate the direct method of reporting characteristic of journalism, nor were they influenced by its terse, informative manner when depicting rapidly changing social and political circumstances. After 1896, writers in both genres became increasingly aware of the functions and precepts governing the different forms of composition. Hence, the fundamental distinction: journalists wrote succinct accounts with the objective of reporting impartially on daily events; novelists created works in accordance with the elements that define the novel, namely, an aesthetic purpose, an element of fiction, a



literary style and a correlation with reality.





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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A

Rather than an exhaustive bibliography, the following is solely intended to give some indication of the contribution to journalism of the authors whose work has been referred to in the preceding pages. Unless indicated, the newspapers and magazines referred to were published in Mexico City. (For further bibliographical information, see María del Carmen Millán, Diccionario de escritores mexicanos, México: UNAM, 1967, and Ernest Moore, Bibliografía de novelistas de la Revolución Mexicana, 1940: reprinted New York: Burt Franklin, 1972.)

## ABREU GOMEZ, Ermilo (b. 1894)

Literary works and criticism. Earliest works, mainly short stories, appeared in Revista de Mérida. Later, published literary compositions in El Nacional and its Sunday supplement. Articles of criticism appeared in Nosotros, Revista de Revistas, Letras de México, Repertorio Americano, Frente a Frente, Ruta, Letras, Atenea. Contributed a regular column of criticism to El Universal Ilustrado entitled "Gaceta de Letras".

## ANDA, José Guadalupe de (1880-1950)

Published a chapter of Los cristeros in Patria (Guadalajara), September, 1937.

## ARCE, Miguel

No information available.

## ARENAS GUZMAN, Diego (b. 1892)

Director and editorialist of La Ilustración Mexicana (1915) and later of Revista Nacional. Published articles of informative commentary in El Universal, republishing them later as part of La consumación del crimen. Collaborated with articles and editorials in El Pueblo, Revista Nacional and La Ilustración Mexicana.

## AZUELA, Mariano (1873-1952)

Sometimes wrote under the pseudonyms 'Fierabrás' and 'M. A. González'. Published a series of articles, "Impresiones de un estudiante", in Gil Blas Cómic (1896). Contributed a literary sketch "Esbozo" to El Noticioso (Guadalajara) in 1897. Published Los de abajo as a 'folletín' in El Paso del Norte (Texas; 1915); later serialized in El Mundo (Tampico; 1917), El Universal Ilustrado (1925) and Vanguardia (Buenos Aires; 1928). First publication of Los caciques in El Universal (1917) and of





De como al fin lloró Juan Pablo in Revista Universal (New York; 1918). Serialized Las tribulaciones de una familia decente in El Mundo (Tampico; 1918), El desquite as the 'novela semanal' in El Universal Ilustrado (June, 1925), La malhora in Contemporáneos (1930-1931), Los fracasados in the Sunday edition of El Nacional (1933), and Pedro Moreno in El Nacional (1933-1934). Extensive publications of literature and literary criticism in national and international newspapers, magazines and reviews. Nationally, these included Kalendas (Lagos de Moreno), El Correo de Jalisco (Guadalajara), El Correo Literario (Guadalajara), Don Quijote (Puebla), El Imparcial, El Universal Ilustrado, Contemporáneos, El Universal Gráfico, Hoy and Universidad.

BARREDA, Octavio (1897-1964)

As a student, co-founded San-Ev-Ank (1918), a literary magazine. Founder and director of Letras de México and El Hijo Pródigo. Contributed articles, literary criticism, art reviews, literary translations to all these as well as to numerous others, including La Falanga, Contemporáneos and Taller Poético IV.

CAMPO, Angel de (1868-1908)

Used the pseudonyms 'Tick Tack' and 'Micrós'. Contributed short stories, poetry, chronicles, articles, editorials and other prose works to numerous newspapers and magazines, among them El Liceo Mexicano, El Partido Liberal, El Mundo Ilustrado, Revista de México, México: Revista de la Sociedad de Artes y Letras, Revista Azul, El Universal, El Cómicó. In El Nacional he published a series of articles entitled "Ocios", republished later as part of Ocios y apuntes, and his novel La rumba (1890-1891). Contributed a series entitled "Semanas alegres", a combination of short stories, 'costumbrista' scenes, observations and personal commentary, to El Imparcial (1900-1908). Worked as an editor for El Liceo Mexicano.

CAMPOBELLO, Nellie (b. 1909)

Was a regular contributor to El Universal Gráfico, commenting on unusual and amusing news items. Published an extract of Cartucho in El Universal Ilustrado. Contributed a piece of literary criticism on Guzmán and his writing to Ruta (1928).

CAMPOS ALATORRE, Cipriano (1906-1934)

Irma appeared as a 'novela semanal' in El Universal Ilustrado (1934). Published articles of literary criticism in El Heraldo Dominical and Hoy.





## DELGADO, Rafael (1853-1914)

Published his first 'cuadros de costumbres' and articles of literary criticism in newspapers and magazines in Orizaba. Serialized La Calandria in Revista Nacional de Letras y Ciencias (1890), Angelina in the literary section of El Tiempo (1894), Los parientes ricos in Semanario Literario Ilustrado (1901-1902) and Historia vulgar in El País (1904). Contributed short stories, articles, poetry and theatre to numerous periodicals, including Revista Azul, Revista Moderna, El Tiempo and El País.

## ESTRADA, Genaro (1887-1937)

Prior to 1912 worked as a newspaperman in Sinaloa. Collaborated in various newspapers and magazines, principally El Mañana, El Diario, Pagaso, Contemporáneos, Hoy and Revista de Revistas.

## FERREL, José (1865-1954)

Began his career as a journalist in El Correo de la Tarde (Mazatlán). Was founder, owner and director of the opposition newspaper El Demócrata (1895-1896). For a time was also 'director político' of La Patria. Contributed literary compositions to various periodicals: Reproducciones appeared in El Demócrata; a novel and short stories in Revista Moderna.

## FERRETIS, Jorge (1902-1962)

Was director of El Potosí and La Voz (San Luis Potosí). Contributed short stories, articles and commentaries to many national periodicals, among them Universidad Obrera, El Universal Ilustrado, Letras de México, Hoy, Letras bibliográficas, Mexican Life, Crisol, Excelsior, El Universal and El Demócrata. His book Necesitamos inmigración? was a collection of eleven articles previously published in El Universal.

## FRIAS, Heriberto (1870-1925)

First collaborations in newspapers were melodramatic poems published in El Debate (1889). Worked as a journalist in El Porvenir de Chihuahua, Gil Blas Cómic, El Mundo Ilustrado, El Campeón Republicano, La Voz del Trabajo, El Progreso Latino, El Imparcial. Worked as an editor for El Demócrata, and as a director for El Progreso Latino, El Correo de la Tarde (Mazatlán), El Monitor, La Voz de Sonora (Sonora) and La Convención. First published Tomochic as a 'novela de folletín' in El Demócrata. Subsequently, contributed short stories, articles on Mexican history, chronicles, 'leyendas' and commentaries to a variety of Mexican periodicals, most importantly El Mundo Ilustrado, Gil Blas,





El Demócrata, Revista Moderna, Diario del Hogar, México Nuevo, El Siglo XIX, El Mundo Ilustrado, El Imparcial and La Libertad (Michoacán).

GAMBOA, Federico (1864-1939)

Used the pseudonym 'La Coccardière'. Began working in Journalism as an editor and interviewer for El Diario del Hogar. During the Revolutionary years was assistant director of La Reforma Social (Havana) and later, editor of the law review, El Foro. Contributed reviews, literary articles, commentaries and prose compositions to El Lunes, El Universal (Spíndola's newspaper), Revista Moderna, Revista Azul and El Siglo XIX; published his 'Crónicas semanales' in El Diario del Hogar. Serialized El evangelista, "novela de costumbres mexicanas", in El Universal (1922).

GOMEZ PALACIO, Martín (b. 1893)

Contributed prose and poetry to a number of periodicals, including Contemporáneos, Pegaso, El Universal Ilustrado and Crisol.

GONZALEZ, Manuel W. (b. 1889)

Contributed short stories and chapters of Con Carranza and Contra Villa to El Universal Ilustrado.

GOYTORTUA, Jesús (b. 1910)

Wrote under the pseudonyms 'Claudio Vardel' and 'Fidel'. Founder and director of the magazine Las Democracias, "periódico antitotalitario bimestral" (1943). Published Pensativa in El Universal; also collaborated with short stories and articles in Revista de Revistas and Arte y Plata.

GRAM, Jorge (1889-1950)

No information available.

GUZMAN, Martín Luis (b. 1887)

Was editor of La Juventud (Veracruz; 1899-1903) and subsequently of El Imparcial. During the Revolution, while in Spain, he contributed extensively to the major newspapers and magazines of Madrid; was also editor of El Sol and La Voz. Other editorial contributions appeared in El Herald, El Mundo, and El Gráfico (New York); the editorials of the latter formed the basis of A orillas del Hudson (México; 1920). In El Universal, serialized El águila y la serpiente (1926), La sombra del caudillo (1929)





and Las memorias de Pancho Villa (1936). Published short stories, chronicles, articles and literary extracts in Ruta, Révue hispanique, El Universal, El Universal Ilustrado, Letras de México, México Moderno, El Heraldillo, Romance, Révue de l'Amérique Latine (Paris), Revista Universal (New York) and El Gráfico (New York).

HFRNANDEZ, Efrén (1904-1958)

Was assistant director of América, "revista antológica". Published literary compositions in América and Acento, as well as contributing articles of literary criticism to most major Mexican newspapers.

FRIMONT, Celestino Herrera (b. 1904)

Contributed literary criticism, short stories and articles to El Universal Ilustrado, El Libro y El Pueblo, Letras de México, Ruta, Aurora, El Nacional and El Dictamen (Vera Cruz).

ICAZA, Xavier (b. 1892)

Contributed literary works and literary criticism to El Universal Ilustrado, Pagaso, La Antorcha, México Moderno, Futuro, Letras de México, El Libro y El Pueblo, Novedades, Mexican Life and Books Abroad. Under President Ruiz Cortines, directed the "Oficina de la Prensa de la Secretaría de Trabajo".

JIMENEZ RUEDA, Julio (b. 1896)

As a student was director of the magazine El Estudiante. Between 1943 and 1952, directed the Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación and Revista Iberoamericana. Contributed literary criticism, chronicles, commentaries, editorials and literary works to the newspapers Excelsior, El Universal, El Heraldillo, El Universal Ilustrado and El Progreso (Puebla), and to the magazines El Libro y El Pueblo, Revista de Revistas and La Epoca (Guadalajara).

LIRA, Miguel (1905-1961)

Director of the literary periodicals Huytlale and Universidad.

LIST ARZUBIDE, Germán

Published the literary magazine Ser (1922). Collaborated in El Libro y El Pueblo and Ruta.





LOPEZ-PORTILLO Y ROJAS, José (1850-1923)

As a young writer he contributed literature and literary criticism to newspapers of Guadalajara. Co-founder of La República Literaria (Guadalajara; 1886-1890). Contributed poetry to Revista Moderna, El Siglo XIX and Revista Azul. Collaborated extensively in newspapers and magazines, publishing short stories, narratives and chronicles, many of which have been collected and re-published in Vols. 27 and 49 of the collection Biblioteca de Autores Mexicanos.

LOPEZ Y FUENTES, Gregorio (1897-1966)

In his youth published poetry in the review Nosotros (Vera Cruz). Serialized El vagabundo in El Universal Ilustrado (1922) and Tierra in El Gráfico. Contributed poetry, short stories, extracts of novels, editorials and articles to a variety of Mexican periodicals, among them El Universal, Arte y Literatura, México al Día, and Ruta. Was editor of El Gráfico (1924-1929), to which he also contributed his "Novela diaria de la vida real", short, novelized accounts of current news items. Later, was director of El Gráfico (1937-1945) and subsequently of El Universal (1945-1952).

LUQUIN, Eduardo (b. 1896)

Published numerous articles on a variety of topics, often of literary criticism. Most frequent collaborations with Mexican periodicals were in El Universal Ilustrado, Letras de México and Resumen.

MADRIGAL, Sierra

No information available.

MAGDALENO, Mauricio (b. 1906)

Worked as a newspaper agent for El Demócrata. Contributed chronicles, literary criticism, articles, editorials and literatura to many periodicals, in particular, El Universal, El Nacional, El Universal Gráfico, El Libro y El Pueblo, Letras de México, América (Cuba), La Nueva Democracia (New York) and El Sol (Spain).

MANCISIDOR, José (1894-1956)

Collaborated extensively in newspapers and magazines, predominantly those of the left. Also contributed articles, editorials, literary criticism and news reports to El Dictamen (Verz Cruz), La Voz del Campesino, La Claridad, El Gladiador, Aurora, Cimiento, Crisol, Ruta, El Nacional, El Universal Ilustrado, Frente a Frente, Letras de México and Romance.





MAOUEO CASTELLANOS, Esteban

Contributed occasional articles to El Universal.

MENDEZ DE CUENCA, Laura (1853-1928)

Published editorials and literature (poetry and prose) in El Universal, El Correo Español, El Pueblo and El Mercurio. Serialized El espejo de Amarillis as a 'novela de folletín' in El Imparcial (1902). Founder of Revista Hispano Americana (San Francisco). Reported on international congresses on education for the official periodicals of educational organizations.

MONTERDE, Francisco (b. 1894)

Contributed literary criticism, short stories, editorials and diverse articles to numerous periodicals, notably El Universal, El Nacional, Biblos, Letras de México, Universidad de México, Revista de Estudios Literarios, Filosofía y Letras, Revista Iberoamericana and Revista de Revistas.

MUNOZ, Rafael F. (b. 1899)

Journalist and collaborator. In 1915 was editor of a local newspaper in Chihuahua. Became editor and special correspondent for El Universal Gráfico. Under President Portes Gil was director of El Nacional. Was named "Secretario de Prensa de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores" and later held that position with the "Secretaría de Prensa en Educación Pública". Serialized Memorias de Pancho Villa in El Universal Gráfico (1923), and contributed short stories, commentaries, articles and literary criticism to El Herald, El Universal, El Nacional, El Universal Ilustrado, Mexican Life, El Libro y El Pueblo, Frente a Frente and Ruta.

NERVO, Amado (1870-1919)

Wrote under the pseudonyms 'Román' and 'El Duque Job'. Served as special correspondent for El Imparcial and also as editor of El Universal. Published El donador de almas as a 'novela de folletín' in El Cómic. Also contributed short stories, articles, chronicles, essays, poetry and novels to newspapers and magazines throughout Spanish America; among national publications were El Correo de la Tarde (Mazatlán), Revista Azul, El Universal, El Nacional, El Mundo, El Imparcial, El Universal Ilustrado and La Revista Moderna.

NOVO, Salvador (b. 1904)

Contributed poetry, criticism, literary extracts and





articles to Excelsior, Bandera de Provincias (Guadalupe), México Moderno, Prisma, El Universal, El Universal Ilustrado and Barandal. Also served as director of the review La novela mexicana and co-director of Ulises.

OTHON DIAZ, Enrique

Published poetry and literary criticism in Crisol.

OWEN, Gilberto (1905-1952)

Contributed literary extracts to Ulises and Contemporáneos. Published La llama fría in El Universal Ilustrado (1925).

PARRA, Porfirio (1855-1910)

Founder of two newspapers, El Método and El Positivismo. Extensive publication of poetry, literary criticism and articles in many national periodicals, most notably, La Libertad, Revista de la Instrucción Pública Mexicana, Revista de Chihuahua, Revista Positiva, Gaceta Médica, El Universal, Escuela de Medicina, Revista Moderna and Revista Azul.

PUTG CASAURANC, José María (1888-1939)

Served as a director of El Demócrata and as an editor for El Universal. Founder of the magazine Resumen (1931). Contributed articles and editorials to many Mexican newspapers, especially El Imparcial and El Universal; in the latter, published a series of articles entitled "Juárez, una interpretación humana".

QUEVEDO Y ZUBIETA, Salvador (1859-1935)

Founder of the opposition newspaper El Lunes (1880). While in exile in Spain (1882-1884), contributed articles and literary extracts to Spanish newspapers. In Mexico, collaborated with short stories, special articles and poetry in El Universal Ilustrado, El Partido Liberal, Revista Azul and El Diario del Hogar.

QUIROZ, Alberto (b. 1907)

Co-founder of two literary magazines, El Condor and Savia Nueva. Published literary extracts and criticism in Umbral, El Condor, América, El Libro y El Pueblo, El Nacional, El Universal Gráfico, La Prensa and Excelsior.

RABASA, Emilio (1856-1930)

Journalist, essayist and novelist. Began writing as a journalist for El Porvenir (San Cristobal de las Casas) and



El Liberal (Oaxaca). Associated with Rafael Reyes Spíndola in founding El Universal. Most of his novels first appeared in newspapers; La guerra de tres años was published in El Universal (July, 1891). Published poetry in La Iberia and Revista Azul. Wrote numerous articles on judicial topics since he was, by profession, a lawyer.

RAMIREZ DE AGUILAR, Fernando (1887-1953)

Used the pseudonym "Jacobo Dalevuelta". Was a reporter for El Universal and El Imparcial. During the Revolution, was special correspondent for a number of Mexican dailies. Also published chronicles, essays, commentaries and literary extracts in various newspapers, principally, El Universal Ilustrado, El País, El Demócrata and El Universal.

REVUELTAS, José (1914-1976)

Worked as a reporter and editorialist for El Popular. Published literary criticism, articles and editorials in a wide variety of newspapers and literary periodicals.

REYES, José Ascensión

No information available.

ROBLES, Fernando (b. 1897)

Served as an editor of La Crítica (Buenos Aires). Worked as a journalist throughout South America and in New York as well.

ROBLETO, Hernán

Contributed short stories, literary criticism and articles to El Gráfico, Revista Quincenal, El Universal Ilustrado, Imagen and Letras.

ROMERO, José Rubén (1890-1952)

Used the pseudonym 'Lirio del Valle'. For a time was editor of El Universal. As a student, published Iris, "Literatura, Política, Variedades". Contributed poetry and articles to a large number of newspapers and magazines, including La Patria, La Actualidad (Morelia), El Pueblo (Morelia), El Constitucional (Morelia), El Herald (Morelia), El Telescopio (Cotija de la Paz), Frente a Frente and Hoy.

RULFO, Juan (b. 1918)

Published his first short stories in Pan. Collaborated in nearly every major Mexican periodical.





**SAN JUAN, Manuel H. (1864-1917)**

Journalist and novelist. Began as an opposition journalist in Oaxaca. Was associated with Rafael Reyes Spíndola in founding El Universal. Was director of the Diario Oficial in Chiapas. First draft of El señor gobernador appeared as a series of articles in El Cómicó.

**SARQUIS, Francisco**

No information available.

**SPOTA, Luis (b. 1925)**

Was a reporter for Hoy and Excélsior. Wrote articles for Novedades and Política. Director of El Heraldó Cultural and the magazine Espejo.

**TORO, Carlos (1875-1941)**

Used the pseudonyms 'Tilín-Tilín' and 'Diógenes'. Began as a journalist for El Universal. Also published literary works and criticism in El Imparcial, El País and El Tiempo.

**TORRES, Teodoro (1891-1944)**

Used the pseudonym 'Caricato'. Contributed literary works and criticism to El Universal, El Universal Ilustrado, Revista de Revistas, Saber, Abside and Excélsior. Wrote editorials for Excélsior, La Prensa and México al Día. Director of La Prensa (San Antonio, Texas). Founded the first school of journalism in Mexico; wrote a number of studies on journalism.

**TORRES BODET, Jaime (b. 1902)**

Contributed literary extracts and criticism to Taller Poético, Contemporáneos, Mexican Life and La Prensa (Buenos Aires). Was co-director of Falanga and Contemporáneos.

**URQUIZO, Francisco (b. 1891)**

Published articles, essays and literary extracts in El Universal Ilustrado, Mañana, Tónicos, El Legionario, El Nacional, El Universal, Revista de Revistas, México al Día and Marte, "periódico de la División Suprema de Poderes". Also contributed articles to American newspapers.

**VALLE-ARIZPE, Artemio de (1888-1961)**

Published historical chronicles and articles on aspects of colonial Mexico in numerous periodicals, predominantly El Universal.



VASCONCELOS, José (1881-1959)

Director of the weekly El Antirreeleccionista (1910). Founded and directed the literary review Antorcha (Paris). Published articles and literary criticism in El Universal Ilustrado and Atenea, and in major periodicals throughout Latin America, including El Tiempo (Bogota), El País (Havana), Crítica (Buenos Aires) and La Prensa. Serialized parts of Ulises Criollo in El Universal Ilustrado.

VELA, Arqueles (b. 1899)

Used the pseudonym 'Silvestre Paradox'. Began writing as a journalist for El Demócrata. Named director of the literary supplement of El Nacional (1933). Published La señorita Etcétera in El Universal Ilustrado; contributed short stories, articles and poetry to El Nacional and Ruta as well.

VERA, Agustín (1889-1946)

Directed and collaborated in Banderas de Provincia (Guadalajara).

VILLAUERRUTIA, Xavier (1903-1950)

Co-director of the literary magazine Ulises. Published literary extracts and criticism in most major literary periodicals, most importantly, Contemporáneos, Atenas, México en el Arte, Revista de Bellas Artes, Letras de México, El Hijo Pródigo, Tierra Nueva, Antena and La Voz Nueva.

YANEZ, Agustín (b. 1904)

Director of Bandera de Provincias. Contributed articles and literary criticism to a large number of newspapers and literary journals.





## Appendix B

The following is a survey of novels published between 1890 and 1900 in the principal newspapers of Mexico City. The list was compiled from newspapers on file in the Hemeroteca Nacional in the national capital.

- 1891: R. de Zayas Enríquez, Fisiología del crimen (El Siglo XIX)  
Tribunales extranjeras (El Siglo XIX)
- 1892: author unknown, La Americana (La Patria)
- 1893: Heriberto Frías, Tomochic (El Demócrata)
- 1894: Emile Zola, Lourdes (El Siglo XIX)
- 1895: Alphonse Daudet, La petite paroisse (El Diario del Hogar)  
 Heriberto Frías, Naufragio (El Demócrata)  
 J. Michelet, Toma de la Bastilla (El Siglo XIX)  
 José Ferrel, Reproducciones (El Demócrata)
- 1896: André Therieut, Flor de Niza (El Mundo)  
 Jules Verne, Un drama en México (La Patria)  
 V. Hugo, Nuestra señora de París (La Patria)
- 1897: María Lescot, El engaño (El Mundo: the weekly)  
 Fridtjof Nansen, Hacia el polo (El Mundo: the weekly)  
 Jules Claretie, El tren 17 (El Mundo: the daily)
- 1898: Ponson du Terrail, Carmen la gitana (El Imparcial)  
 Ponson du Terrail, La condesa de Artoff (El Imparcial)
- 1899: author unknown, La venganza de Clodion (El Mundo)  
 Juan A. Mateos, Las olas altas (El Mundo)
- 1900: Ponson du Terrail, La prisión de Rocambola (El Imparcial)  
 Ponson du Terrail, El loco de Bedlam (El Imparcial)  
 André Therieut, Corazones lacerados (La Patria)  
 E. Fournière, Condiciones físicas, morales e intelectuales del amor (La Patria)  
 Matilde Serrao, Bailarina (El Universal)  
 M. Goron, Las parias del amor (El Universal)  
 Paul Aubry de St. Brieuc, El contagio del asesinato (El Universal)
- 1901: M. P. Hartmann, Un ladrón de alto copete (El Universal)
- 1902: Carolina Invernizio, Los amores de Marcelo (El Imparcial)  
 Carolina Invernizio, El espectro del pasado (El Imparcial)  
 Laura Méndez de Cuenca, El espejo de Amarilis (El Mundo)  
 Carlota Braemé, La novela de una niña (El Mundo)  
 author unknown, El joven Maugars (La Patria)





- 1904: C. Invernizio, Las hijas de la duquesa (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, Las víctimas del amor (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, Riña (El Imparcial)  
 A. Dumas, Memorias de un médico (El Mundo)  
 E. Sue, Los misterios de París (El Mundo)  
 C. Braemé, Historia de un velo negro (El Mundo)  
 E. Sue, El judío errante (El Mundo)  
 V. Blasco Ibáñez, La catedral (El Mundo)  
 A. Dumas, El collar de la reina (El Mundo)  
 author unknown, La exposición de París (La Patria)  
 Oscar Wilde, El retrato de Dorian Gray (La Patria)
- 1906: José Mármol, Amalia (El Diario)  
 Ponson du Terrail, Las celadas de Olimpia (El Imparcial)  
 Ponson du Terrail, El montaraz (El Imparcial)  
 H. G. Wells, El alimento de los dioses (El Mundo)  
 José Escofet, Cepas y olivos (La Patria)  
 V. Hugo, Los trabajadores del mar (El Mundo)  
 M. Paynó, Los benditos del Río Frío (El Mundo)
- 1907: C. Dickens, La casa lúgubre (El Diario)
- 1908: H. R. Haggard, Las minas del rey Salomon (El Herald)  
 Mrs. Wood, Expiación o martirio de una madre (El Herald)  
 C. Invernizio, El suplicio de la inocencia (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, La boda trágica (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, La hija del cementerio (El Imparcial)
- 1909: A. C. Doyle, Aventuras de Sherlock Holmes (El Diario)  
 S. D. Jiménez y Muro, La lucha (El Diario del Hogar)  
 C. Invernizio, La lucha suprema (El Herald)  
 M. Calero, Cuestiones electorales (Nuevo México)
- 1910: A. Dumas, Los mil y un fantasmas (El Diario)  
 J. Verne, Los ingleses en el polo norte (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, Sirena (El Imparcial)  
 C. Invernizio, Misterios de las Buhardillas (El Imparcial)  
 René Bazan, Los Noellats (El Imparcial)  
 Cervantes, Don Quijote de la Mancha (La Patria)  
 Ireneo Paz, Algunas campañas (La Patria)





## Appendix C

The following reports, relating the attempted assassination of Porfirio Díaz, are taken from three sources. The first is attributed by Salvador Quevedo y Zubieta, in La camada, to the imaginary daily, El Justiciero. The second is the actual report published in El Imparcial on September 17, 1897, material that obviously provided the source for the quotation in Quevedo y Zubieta's novel. The final report is taken from another contemporary newspaper, La Patria. All three reports are, incidentally, excellent examples of newspaper reporting at the end of the XIXth century.

A) Extracts attributed to El Justiciero by Quevedo y Zubieta in La camada:

"El Sr. General Díaz se aproximaba al lugar designado para la ceremonia oficial, cuando precisamente al llegar al punto en que se encuentran situados los leones que sobre pedestal de mármol dan acceso al conocido parque (¡donoso epíteto!), un hombre densamente pálido (¡donosa densidad! ¿puede decirse de la palidez, ni aun en figurado, que es densa?) y de aspecto repugnante, rompe con decisión la valla que en aquel punto formaban los alumnos del colegio militar.

El cadete que no esperaba tal agresión por la espalda, cede a la violencia del empujón recibido, pierde el equilibrio (¡sin caer!) y cuando repuesto, se dispone al cumplimiento de su deber, ya se había llevado á cabo.

## EL ATENTADO

Aquel criminal insensato, veloz como el rayo (velocidad curul) se precipitó, abriéndose paso entre los Sres. Generales Pradillo y Comodoro de la Armada Nacional, Sr. Ortíz Monasterio, quienes con mucha actividad que desplegaron (¡vaya una actividad!) no pudieron evitar que se arrojara sobre el Sr. Presidente y le infiriera un golpe con algún objeto, tal vez una piedra que llevaba en la mano, haciendo caer el sombrero montado y produciéndole una conmoción que por fortuna no tuvo importancia alguna.

El Sr. Presidente hizo un movimiento, como para librarse de un objeto que caía sobre él; pues se imaginó que un poste que había visto vacilante al impulso de la multitud, se había desplomado.

El Sr. Monasterio asestó luego un tan tremendo palo sobre la cabeza del agresor que lo hizo vacilar; y como se rompiera el bastón, con un pedazo de él que pudo agarrar (primer agarrón) el insensato quiso desprenderse del General Pradillo que trataba de derribarlo, y con él le desgarró la manga de la levita.

Los señores ayudantes lo agarraron (segundo agarrón) luego, y sujetándole fuertemente, le dejaron imposibilitado para moverse y le entregaron al Capitán Lacroix.

Entretanto, el Sr. Presidente se inclinó á coger su





sombrero montado que se colocó en la cabeza inmediatamente y contestó las preguntas que le hicieron los señores ministros diciéndoles que absolutamente nada serio le había sucedido.....

"El Sr. General Díaz siguió tranquilamente su marcha, limitándose á encargar al Sr. General Lacroix (¿tan pronto General?) la custodia del reo pronunciando esta frase: 'Cuide Ud. que no se haga ningún mal á ese hombre.'

Y sigue el periódico

#### ¡INDIGNACION GENERAL!

Hubo un incidente que causó honda sensación entre los que lo presenciaron. Un hombre de la clase humilde (¿qué hubiera sido si no fuera humilde?) un cargador, se lanzó frenético sobre el asesino (Sic! Un agresor que no causa lesión de importancia alguna, pasa á asesino, como pasó a general el capitán Lacroix, con la velocidad del rayo); y en arranque implacable (¿qué tal clase humilde?) lo agarró (tercer agarrón) por el cuello y amenazándole con un puñal, le dijo: "¿Qué le ha hecho Ud. al Sr. General Díaz?" --La policía evitó que ese hombre desfogara su ira sobre el asesino. (Y ¡dale! El Justiciero insistía en matar al Presidente por su propia cuenta)." (pp. 368-370)

Later, Quevedo y Zubieta attributes the following report of the death of the accused assassin, Arnulfo Arroyo, to El Justiciero:

"ARNULFO ARROYO LYNCHADO," proclamaba el Justiciero y seguía la literatura de Ezquerro:

Un tropel de hombres del pueblo penetró desordenadamente hoy á la una de la mañana al Palacio Municipal, subió las escaleras y arrollando á los gendarmes que hacían la guardia, llegó hasta el despacho del Inspector General de Policía, matando á Arnulfo Arroyo que se encontraba preso en aquel lugar. (p. 414)

B) Extracts from reports published on the first page of El Imparcial, Friday, September 17, 1897.

"El Sr. General Díaz se aproximaba al lugar designado para la ceremonia oficial, cuando precisamente al llegar al punto en que se encuentran situados los leones que sobre pedestal de mármol dan acceso al conocido parque, un hombre desarrapado densamente pálido y de aspecto repugnante, rompe con decisión la valla que en aquel punto formaban los alumnos del colegio militar.

El cadete que no esperaba tal agresión por la espalda, cede á la violencia del empujón recibido, pierde su equilibrio y cuando repuesto, se dispone al cumplimiento de su deber, ya se





había llevado á cabo.

#### EL ATENTADO

Aquel criminal insensato, veloz como rayo se precipitó, abriéndose paso entre los Sres. Generales Pradillo y Comodoro de la Armada Nacional, Sr. Ortíz Monasterio, quienes con mucha actividad que desplegaron no pudieron evitar que se arrojara sobre el Sr. Presidente y le infiriera un golpe con algún objeto, tal vez una piedra que llevaba en la mano, haciendo caer el sombrero montado y produciéndole una conmoción que por fortuna no tuvo importancia alguna.

El Sr. Presidente hizo un movimiento, como para librarse de un objeto que caía sobre él; pues se imaginó que un poste que había visto vacilante al impulso de la multitud, se había desplomado.

El Sr. Monasterio asestó luego un tan tremendo palo sobre la cabeza del agresor que lo hizo vacilar; y como se rompiera el bastón, con un pedazo de él que pudo agarrar el insensato, quiso desprenderse del General Pradillo que trataba de derribarlo, y con él lo desgarró la manga de la levita.

Los señores ayudantes lo agarraron luego y sujetándole fuertemente, le dejaron imposibilitado para moverse y le entregaron al Capitán Lacroix.

Entretanto, el Sr. Presidente se inclinó a coger su sombrero montado que se colocó en la cabeza inmediatamente y contestó á las preguntas que le hicieron los señores ministros diciéndoles que absolutamente nada serio le había pasado.

Toda esta escena no duró más de un minuto, la comitiva se reorganizó luego, y el Señor General Díaz siguió tranquilamente su marcha limitándose á encargarse al Sr. General Lacroix la custodia del reo, pronunciando esta frase: "CUIDE USTED DE QUE NO SE HAGA NADA A ESE HOMBRE."

#### ¡INDIGNACION POPULAR!

Hubo un incidente que causó honda sensación entre los que lo presenciaron. Un hombre de la clase humilde del pueblo, un cargador, se lanzó frenético sobre el asesino y en arranque implacable y amenazándole con un puñal le dijo:

¿Qué le ha hecho á usted el Señor General Díaz?

La policía evitó que ese hombre desahogara sobre el asesino su cólera.

La indignación que se apoderó inmediatamente de los que fueron testigos presenciales del atentado se tradujo en manifestaciones tales..."

On the same day, El Imparcial carried a late report on the death of the accused attacker, Arnulfo Arroyo.

#### ARNULFO ARROYO LYNCHADO

El hecho sensacional registrado ayer en la Alameda ha tenido su desenlace:

Un tropel de hombres del pueblo penetró desordenadamente hoy á la una de la mañana al Palacio Municipal, subió las





escaleras y arrollando á los gendarmes que hacían la guardia, llegó hasta el despacho del Inspector General de Policía, atando a Arnulfo Arroyo que se encontraba preso en aquel lugar." (p. 2)

C) Extracts from reports carried in *La Patria*, Saturday, September 18, 1897: attempt of Díaz's life.

#### ATENTADO CONTRA EL SR. PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA

Con una nota desagradable han terminado las fiestas de la patria.

Cuando la Nación entera, con unánime regocijo, le significaba su cariño al General Díaz y su gratitud á los libertadores, un desequilibrado dipsómano, en el arrebatado producido por el 'delirium tremens', cometió un atentado que con la vida acaba de pagar.

Ello fué que en la mañana del 16, cuando se aproximaba á pie el Sr. General Díaz al Pabellón Morisco de la Alameda, un ebrio consuetudinario que hace poco tiempo arrastraba la toga del abogado en los figones y tabernas, un individuo llamado Arnulfo Arroyo Romero, rompiendo la valla de las tropas se lanzó sobre el Sr. General Díaz dándole un golpe en la cabeza que le tiró el sombrero montado y sin causarle, por fortuna, la más ligera lesión.

Aquello tuvo la duración de un relámpago, pero no obstante la natural sorpresa producida por la brusquedad de la agresión, el Sr. Brigadier Monasterio asestó un bastonazo en la cabeza del delincuente, rompiendo en dos su bastón de mando. El criminal se inclinó para recoger uno de los fragmentos y con él de desgarró las mangas de la levita al General Pradillo que lo sujetaba. Hubo una brega entre Arroyo, los citados Jefes del Ejército y los ayudantes del Sr. Presidente de la República hasta que al fin lo entregaron maniatado al Capitán Lacroix, ayudante del Gobernador del Palacio Nacional.

Imperturbable, sereno, el Sr. General Díaz recogió su sombrero y al colocárselo nuevamente en la cabeza le dijo al Capitán Lacroix:

"Cuide Vd. de que no se le haga nada á ese hombre."

De pronto fué conducido Arroyo á la Prevención del Palacio Nacional, en donde se le hizo un registro, sin que se le encontrase arma alguna.

Momentos después, fué conducido á la Inspección General de Policía.

Al regresar de la Alameda el Sr. General Díaz fué objeto de una frenética ovación.

.....

#### LYNCHAMIENTO

Nadie podrá suponer que Arnulfo Arroyo expiase su delito tan pronto.





A la una de la mañana, pocas horas después del atentado, dormitaba en la Inspección General, bajo la vigilancia del Sr. Cabrera, 2o jefe de las comisiones de seguridad y de unos gendarmes, cuando un tropel de hombres del pueblo penetró en la habitación del preso, rompiendo las vidrieras y en un instante cosió á puñaladas á Arroyo dejándolo muerto en el sitio.

El Sr. Cabrero hizo fuego desde un balcón para pedir auxilio y se presentaron el Inspector General de Policía y el Inspector Villavicencio que rondaba á caballo la ciudad.

Fueron capturados Juan Salazar, José Muñoz, Abel Torres, Mariano Sánchez, Carlos Díaz, Gregorio Belmont, Santiago Ordóñez, Domingo Beltrán, Silverio Macías y un joven empleado de la Corte de Justicia Militar." (pp. 2 and 3)

Additional, minor details printed in La Patria also appeared in the novel La camada. La Patria reported rumours and allegations that the attempted assassination was part of a political conspiracy. The Inspector of Police, Eduardo Velazquez, was eventually implicated in the plot and shortly afterwards committed suicide. Quevedo y Zubieta included him as a character in his novel, and recounted his part in the affair. The circumstances of Velázquez's suicide, as portrayed in La camada, were also reported in La Patria on Saturday, September 25, 1897:

SUICIDIO DEL SENOR D. EDUARDO VELAZQUEZ  
[EX-INSPECTOR DE POLICIA]

Por fin, ante la tremenda situación que se había abierto, descubierta enteramente su gran responsabilidad en el asesinato de Arnulfo Arroyo, acosado por el remordimiento y por los tonos negros del porvenir, evidenciado por los mismos que le sirvieron de cómplices y aun le inspiraron el crimen, confeso ya como un ultimatum irremediable é ineludible, tomó la resolución suprema de quitarse la vida y se privó de ella ayer en la mañana, disparándose un tiro de pistola. (p. 2)





## Appendix D

The following are extracts taken from newspaper reports concerning the uprising led by General Francisco Serrano from Martín Luis Guzmán's La sombra del caudillo, in which the general is portrayed as Ignacio Aguirre. To facilitate comparison, the extracts are grouped in four sections according to content. In each section, the extract from La sombra del caudillo, supposedly quoted from the newspaper El Gran Diario, is followed by actual reports that appeared in El Universal and Excélsior.

## I

Propiamente, El Gran Diario no afirmaba nada, por su cuenta; tres líneas solo y, luego, una declaración oficial y dos larguísimos boletines con cada párrafo entre comillas. Era, pues, manifiesto que el diario no contaba lo que sabía, sino aquello que le obligaban a contar. Las líneas preliminares lucían con laconismo elocuente. La noticia era como sigue:

"Pasada la medianoche de ayer llegaron a este periódico rumores sobre sublevaciones militares en Puebla y Toluca. Ocurrimos desde luego, en demanda de datos oficiales, al Estado Mayor Presidencial. Allí el señor general Carlos Torres, jefe de los ayudantes del señor Presidente de la República, nos dijo: "Varias de las corporaciones que guarecen la plaza de México estuvieron a punto de abandonar esta noche sus cuarteles, arrastradas, con engaño, a la rebelión que venían preparando ciertos elementos levantiscos. Por fortuna, los comandantes de los batallones 16, 21 y 44, en cumplimiento de su deber, comunicaron a la superioridad oportunos informes sobre los proyectos de los rebeldes, y eso permitió que los tales planes fueron destruidos casi por completo gracias a la eficacísima intervención del general Protasio Leyva, jefe de las Operaciones Militares en el Valle. Sobre lo acontecido en Puebla y Toluca esta oficina entregará a la prensa, dentro de dos horas, amplios boletines." "¿Qué relación pueden tener estos hechos con los candidatos de la Presidencia?", preguntamos al general Torres. "También acerca de eso--nos contestó--daré pronto a ustedes un informe de carácter oficial." (La sombra del caudillo, pp. 521-522)

#### ALGUNOS SOLDADOS DE LA GUARNICION SE SUBLEVARON ENGANADOS POR SUS JEFES

Durante la tarde de ayer y primeras horas de la noche circularon insistentes rumores sobre la sublevación de algunas fuerzas militares de la guarnición de esta capital. Después de las dos de la madrugada de hoy, ocurrimos a las oficinas del Estado Mayor Presidencial en busca de datos oficiales sobre el particular. El señor general don José Alvarez, jefe del Estado Mayor del Primer Magistrado, nos hizo las siguientes





declaraciones:

"De las veinte corporaciones que constituyen la guarnición de la plaza de México, fueron engañados por sus jefes, algunos de los soldados que integraban tres de ellas, las cuales abandonaron sus cuarteles siguiendo a los que traicionaron al Supremo Gobierno: sin embargo, la mayor parte de la tropa, comprendiendo su equivocada actitud, retornó a sus alojamientos pudiendo asegurarse que no llegan a quinientos hombres los que han faltado al cumplimiento de su deber."

¿Qué relación puede tener esta sublevación con los candidatos presidenciales? preguntamos al general Alvarez.

El jefe del Estado Mayor nos dijo, contestando a esa pregunta: "El gobierno no tenía establecida sobre estos señores ninguna vigilancia. Por tal motivo sólo sé que los señores generales Francisco R. Serrano y Arnulfo R. Gómez salieron del [sic] capital desde ayer en la tarde."

"Para el mediodía de hoy podré proporcionar una relación pormenorizada de lo ocurrido, por medio de un boletín de información para el público." (El Universal, p. 1)

#### ALGUNOS SOLDADOS DE TRES CORPORACIONES DE LA GUARNICION DE MEXICO ABANDONARON SUS CUARTELES ENGANADOS POR SUS JEFES

Habiendo circulado...rumores relacionados con la sublevación de algunas fuerzas militares en esta capital, acudimos...a la jefatura del Estado Mayor Presidencial en busca de datos oficiales, habiendo entrevistado al efecto al señor general José Alvarez, jefe de la mencionada institución, quien se sirvió informarnos lo siguiente:

De los veinte corporaciones que constituyen la guarnición de la plaza de México, fueron engañados por sus jefes algunos de los soldados que integraban tres de ellas, los cuales abandonaron sus cuarteles siguiendo a los que traicionaron al Supremo Gobierno; sin embargo, la mayor parte de la tropa, comprendiendo su mala conducta, retornó a sus alojamientos, pudiendo asegurarse que no llegan a quinientos hombres los que han faltado al cumplimiento del deber.

"Con relación a la pregunta de si sé cuál es la actitud que han asumido los generales Francisco R. Serrano y Arnulfo R. Gómez, no puedo declarar sino que hasta estos momentos es desconocida para el Gobierno, pues que estando ambos en su propaganda electoral, no se ha tenido motivo para ejercer sobre ellos vigilancia alguna.

"En el curso del día de mañana el Gobierno podrá dar al público informes más precisos acerca del número exacto de soldados de las tres corporaciones mencionadas que se compruebe, definitivamente, que hayan defecionado." (Excelsior, p. 1)





## II

El [primer boletín] lo firmaba el Caudillo; decía así:

"Desde que se inició la lucha electoral tuve conocimiento de la labor sediciosa que hacían el general Ignacio Aguirre y algunos de sus partidarios. Supe de jefes militares que habían recibido invitación para rebelarse contra las instituciones. Varios agentes aguirristas viajaban por la República con el propósito de sobornar a los jefes de los cuerpos. Por otra parte, es del dominio público que tanto Aguirre como sus sostenedores, ya en declaraciones a la prensa, ya en sus discursos, anunciaban constantemente, en forma más o menos encubierta, su firme resolución de recurrir a las armas. A pesar de todo, este Gobierno guardó siempre actitud serena; nunca molestó a quien se hacía llamar candidato radical progresista; dio amplias garantías; hizo ver cuál era el camino del patriotismo, y ofreció que el voto público sería respetado. Tan clara fue en esto la conducta del Gobierno, que el general Aguirre jamás pudo hacerle justificados cargos de parcialidad. Todo ello, por desgracia, ha sido inútil. El general Aguirre logró corromper a la mayor parte de las fuerzas comandadas por el general Encarnación Reyes, que anoche asumieron en Puebla actitud de franca rebeldía, y estuvo a punto de conseguir otro tanto con varios batallones de esta capital.

.....  
El Gobierno que presido ha dictado sin tardanza enérgicas disposiciones para batir y deshacer a estos traidores; a la una de la tarde de hoy el general Aispuro, con cinco mil hombres, saldrá a iniciar, en combinación con las fuerzas de Tlaxcala y Veracruz, el avance sobre Puebla, y antes de cuarenta y ocho horas, lo garantizo al país, Aguirre y cuantos lo acompañan habrán caído en poder de las tropas leales, pues ya se le persigue activamente y de cerca. Hago, por último, una solemne promesa a la nación: si este Gobierno fue complaciente en un principio, al punto de pasar por alto muchas de las faltas que se estaban cometiendo, en esta hora de crimen sabrá imponer riguroso castigo, sin distinciones ni consideraciones, a todos los militares y civiles que han trastornado el orden público, atentado contra nuestras instituciones fundamentales y hecho que se derrame sangre inocente."

Esto decía el boletín del Caudillo. (La sombra del caudillo, pp. 522-523)

#### EL SEÑOR PRESIDENTE HABLA DE LA SUBLEVACION MILITAR

Poco antes del mediodía, el señor Presidente de la República hizo a un repórter de El Universal, las declaraciones siguientes:

"Desde que se inició la lucha política, el gobierno de mi cargo tenía conocimientos de la labor de sedición que estaban haciendo los generales Serrano y Gómez. Tuve aviso de distintos jefes militares de que habían recibido invitación de uno y otro para rebelarse contra las instituciones.





"Conocí a muchos de los enviados de estos señores que hacían continuos viajes por distintas partes de la República, tratando de sobornar a los jefes militares.

"Es, por otra parte, del dominio público que tanto Gómez y Serrano como sus amigos, así en las declaraciones que hacían a la prensa como en sus discursos, constantemente estaban hablando en el sentido de que irían a la lucha armada.

"El Ejecutivo de mi cargo tenía conocimiento también de que en la Jefatura de Operaciones Militares en el Valle de México y en la Jefatura de la Guarnición de la Plaza, se estaba conspirando constantemente y conocía las actividades del general Héctor Ignacio Almada.

"A pesar de todo esto, el Ejecutivo guardó una actitud serena; jamás molestó a los que se hacían llamar candidatos Gómez y Serrano; les dió todo género de garantías; los trató siempre como amigos en varias ocasiones y en conferencias privadas con ellos les indicó cuál era el camino del deber y del patriotismo; les hizo ver que el voto público sería garantizado.

"Tan clara fue la conducta del Ejecutivo en ese sentido, que los señores Gómez y Serrano jamás pudieron hacer un cargo justificado de parcialidad en la contienda política o de tomar participación en ella. A pesar de todo esto, Serrano y Gómez lograron corromper con la cooperación del general Eugenio Martínez, a los jefes de cuatro corporaciones pertenecientes a esta Jefatura, las que iniciaron ayer noche un movimiento de rebelión, abandonando sus cuarteles y tomando el camino de Texcoco, no atreviéndose a combatir con las fuerzas leales de la Guarnición.

.....

"El gobierno de mi cargo ha dictado desde luego enérgicas disposiciones para batir y aniquilar a estos traidores y puedo asegurar a la Nación que en término muy perentorio, quedará extinguido este movimiento; que el general Serrano, con todos los que le acompañan antes de cuarenta y ocho horas caerá en manos del gobierno, pues ya se le persigue activamente, y que el general Gómez caerá igualmente en poder de las tropas leales en breve tiempo, si no huye al extranjero.

"Hago igualmente saber a la Nación, que si el gobierno de mi cargo fue en un principio complaciente y hasta disimuló las faltas que se estaban cometiendo, una vez que estos señores, no supieron o no quisieron interpretar los buenos deseos del gobierno, y una vez que han resuelto trastornar el orden público, atentar contra las instituciones del país y derramar sangre inocente, el gobierno, digo, en esta ocasión sabrá castigar sin distinciones y sin consideraciones de ningún género a militares y civiles responsables de este conato de rebelión. Y la Nación conoce bien no sólo a los militares desleales, sino a los civiles que han sido los principales instigadores de este movimiento. ( El Universal, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, p. 1)

REPRUEBA EL PRESIDENTE CALLES EL MOVIMIENTO QUE ESTALLO AYER

Las declaraciones textuales que sobre el asunto nos hizo el





señor Presidente de la República, son las siguientes:

"Desde que se inició la lucha política presidencial, el Gobierno de mi cargo sabía y tenía conocimiento de la labor sediciosa que estaban haciendo los generales Serrano y Gómez.

"Tuve aviso también de varios jefes del Ejército, de haber recibido invitaciones de Gómez y Serrano, para rebelarse en contra del Gobierno constituido.

"Conocí a muchos de los enviados de estos señores candidatos, que hacían frecuentes viajes por la República, tratando de sobornar a jefes militares.

"Esto por otra parte, es del dominio público, pues tanto Gómez como Serrano, así como sus amigos, tanto en sus declaraciones a la Prensa como en sus discursos, constantemente hablaban en el sentido de que irían a la lucha armada.

"El Ejecutivo a mi cargo tenía conocimiento también que en la Jefatura de la Guarnición de la Plaza se estaba conspirando constantemente, y conocía las actividades del general Héctor Ignacio Almada. A pesar de ésto, el Ejecutivo, guiado en una actitud serena, jamás molestó a los candidatos generales Gómez y Serrano, sino que antes bien, les dió todo género de garantías, los trató siempre como amigos; en varias ocasiones, en conferencias privadas con ellos, les indicó el camino del deber y del patriotismo, haciéndoles ver que deberían acudir a la conciencia popular y, por último, les ofreció que el voto público sería garantizado en las elecciones presidenciales.

"Tan clara fué la conducta del Ejecutivo en este sentido, que los señores Gómez y Serrano jamás pudieron hacerle cargo justificado alguno de parcialidad en la contienda política o de tomar la menor participación en ella.

"A pesar de todo ésto, Gómez y Serrano lograron corromper con la cooperación del general Héctor Ignacio Almada, Jefe de Estado Mayor del general Eugenio Martínez, a los jefes de cuatro corporaciones de tropas de esta Jefatura, las que iniciaron ayer noche un movimiento de rebelión abandonando sus cuarteles y tomando el camino de Texcoco, no atreviéndose a combatir con las fuerzas leales de la Guarnición.

.....

(Excelsior, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, p. 1)

### III

...en la misma columna, venía inserta la declaración, también oficial, que Hilario Jiménez, en su carácter de candidato a la Presidencia, lanzaba al pueblo de la República.

"Soy --aseguraba-- el primero en lamentar los dolorosos sucesos que están ocurriendo, pues durante toda mi campaña proclamé con ahinco el deber, igual para todos, de ir tras el triunfo de las urnas, no de la violencia. Pero, de cualquier modo, mi impresión propia es que la asonada urdida por Aguirre y sus cómplices va al fracaso más completo, pese a la





circunstancia de que el traidor general Encarnación Reyes domine por ahora el Estado de Puebla. El señor Presidente, desde luego, cuenta con una enorme fuerza moral: la que le da el haber tolerado en silencio, para que no se le tachara de parcial en las elecciones, la propaganda sediciosa que Aguirre y los suyos hacían cerca de los militares. Cuenta, asimismo, con el Ejército, casi intacto, que sabrá secundarlo, como un solo hombre, en el castigo de los traidores. Y cuenta, por último, con los grandes anhelos de paz de la nación, ansiosa de que sus gobernantes lleguen al Poder por virtud de las leyes y no gracias al golpe de mano armada. El resultado inmediato no me parece, así, difícil de vaticinar: dentro de muy pocos días el orden más completo reinará en el país, con lo que se hará patente la falta de valores intelectuales y morales en quienes ambicionaban, sin ningún título, convertirse en gobernantes. Pero dado caso de que esta apreciación mía resultare engañosa, ofrezco suspender mis trabajos políticos, pues al interés patriótico todo ha de subordinarse, y pedir al Supremo Gobierno que acepte mis servicios como militar y sin otros límites que mis modestas capacidades. Entonces, también, invitaré a las masas campesinas y obreras (las mismas que apoyan mi candidatura) a que cooperen con las diversas Jefaturas de Operaciones en la destrucción total de los elementos traidores de la patria."

Aguirre releyó, hasta el último parpadeo de la última cerilla, los falsos informes oficiales de su levantamiento. Su indignación era inmensa, tanto que parecía haberlo dejado insensible, solo esclavo de un imperativo: tener fija ante los ojos la prueba de que en verdad El Gran Diario decía lo que él estaba leyendo. Muchas monstruosidades había visto, hecho y ayudado a hacer en la Revolución, pero todas ellas, los robos, los saqueos, los raptos, los estupros, los asesinatos, los fusilamientos en masa, las más negras traiciones, no valían, juntas, lo que esta sola. (La sombra del caudillo, p. 523)

#### DECLARACIONES DEL SEÑOR GENERAL ALVARO OBREGON

A las cuatro de la tarde fueron entregadas a la prensa, las siguientes declaraciones firmadas por el señor general Alvaro Obregón:

"Soy el primero en lamentar los sensibles sucesos que ocurrieron, y durante toda mi campaña, proclamé en todas partes que la resolución de la lucha deseábamos obtenerla en las urnas electorales y no en el terreno de la violencia, no obstante de comprender, aun con sacrificio de mi modestia, la inferioridad de nuestros adversarios en capacidad y en número.

"Tengo la impresión de que la asonada que prepararon el general Héctor Almada y algunos otros jefes inferiores, ha fracasado por completo. El número reducido de fuerzas que logró movilizar con engaños (y que en su gran mayoría lo han abandonado cuando se dieron cuenta de que se trataba de una defección) comprueba elocuentemente que él no sabía siquiera el espíritu de disciplina y de lealtad que privaba a esos Cuerpos.





"El fracaso sufrido en Torreón por los jefes del 16 batallón que intentaron por sorpresa atacar a las fuerzas leales, viene a demostrar que todos los elementos de que disponían, estaban preparados para iniciar su movimiento anoche mismo.

"Por otra parte, la gran fuerza moral que da al señor Presidente el hecho de haber tolerado paciente y conscientemente, para que no se le fuera a tachar de parcial en la contienda, la propaganda sediciosa que, tanto los llamados candidatos a la Presidencia, generales Serrano y Gómez, como el grupo de políticos que constituían el cerebro de su propaganda, hacían sin ningunas reservas entre el elemento militar, tratando de predisponerlo contra la autoridad suprema del país, es un factor decisivo que la Nación entera tomará en cuenta para respaldar la autoridad del Primer Mandatario de la República.

"Soy de opinión que la pretendida asonada carece en lo absoluto de importancia y que el país, en unos días más, va a darse cuenta de la absoluta falta de valores morales e intelectuales de los que pretendían corresponder con un cuartelazo inícuo al Supremo Gobierno, el error de éste de haber depositado en ellos su fe y su confianza; pero si un error de apreciación mía, viniera a demostrar lo contrario, suspenderé mis actividades políticas para ponerme al servicio del Gobierno Federal, sin más limitación que la de mi propia capacidad, e invitaré a todas las organizaciones políticas y sociales del país que apoyan mi candidatura para que cooperen con los respectivos jefes de operaciones con toda diligencia y con toda energía. (El Universal, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, pp. 1, 6)

#### DECLARACIONES HECHAS A LA PRENSA AYER POR EL GENERAL ALVARO OBREGON

El señor general de división Alvaro Obregón, candidato a la Presidencia de la República, hizo ayer las declaraciones que siguen:

[the text that followed is an exact duplication of the statement that appeared in El Universal]

(Excelsior, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, p. 1)

#### IV

Al otro día de la muerte de Ignacio Aguirre, los periódicos de la ciudad de México no hablaban con mucha amplitud acerca del levantamiento de Toluca. Una fuerza superior a ellos los obligaba de nuevo a no decir lo que sabían. El Gran Diario tenía apenas un boletín oficial bajo este título de vaguedad reveladora: "Consejo de Guerra en el Estado de México". El boletín decía así:

"En el Estado Mayor de la Presidencia nos fue proporcionado en la madrugada de hoy el boletín siguiente: "El general Ignacio





Aguirre, autor principal de la sublevación iniciada anteanoche, fue capturado, juntamente con un grupo de sus acompañantes, por las fuerzas leales que guarnecen el Estado de México y que son a las órdenes del pundonoroso general de división Julián Elizondo. Se formó a los prisioneros Consejo de Guerra sumarísimo y fueron pasados por las armas. Los cadáveres se encuentran a disposición de los deudos en el Hospital Militar de esta capital y corresponden a las personas siguientes: general de división Ignacio Aguirre; general de brigada Agustín J. Domínguez, gobernador de Jalisco; señor Eduardo Correa, presidente municipal de la ciudad de México; señores licenciados Emilio Olivier Fernández y Juan Manuel Mijares, diputados al Congreso de la Unión; ex generales Alfonso Sandoval y Manuel D. Carrasco; capitanes Felipe Cahuama y Sebastián Rosas, y señores Remigio Tarabana, Alberto Cisneros y Guillermo Ruiz de Velasco." (La sombra del caudillo, p. 532)

#### CONSEJO DE GUERRA SUMARISIMO EN MORELOS

En el Estado Mayor Presidencial se nos proporcionó el siguiente boletín en la madrugada de hoy:

"El General Francisco R. Serrano, uno de los autores de la sublevación, fue capturado en el Estado de Morelos con un grupo de acompañantes por las fuerzas leales que guarnecen aquella Entidad y que son a las órdenes del General de Brigada Juan Domínguez. Se les formó un Consejo de Guerra sumarísimo y fueron pasados por las armas.

Los cadáveres se encuentran en el Hospital Militar de esta capital y corresponden a las personas siguientes: General de División Francisco R. Serrano, Generales Carlos A. Vidal, Miguel A. Peralta y Daniel L. Peralta, señores Lic. Rafael Martínez de Escobar, Alonso Capetillo, Augusto Peña, Antonio Jáuregui, Ernesto Noriega Méndez, Octavio Almada, José Villa Arce, Lic. Otilio González, Enrique Monteverde, Jr., y ex General Carlos V. Ariza. (El Universal, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, p. 1)

#### EL GENERAL FRANCISCO R. SERRANO FUE FUSILADO EL CANDIDATO A LA PRESIDENCIA DE LA NACION, EJECUTADO EL DIVISIONARIO SINALOENSE Y VARIOS DE SUS PARTIDARIOS JUZGADOS EN FORMA SUMARISIMA

El señor general brigadier José Alvarez, jefe del Estado Mayor Presidencial, nos entregó hoy en la madrugada los siguientes boletines:

"El general Francisco R. Serrano, uno de los autores de la sublevación, fué capturado en el Estado de Morelos con un grupo de acompañantes, por las fuerzas leales que guarnecen aquella entidad y que son a las órdenes del general de brigada Juan Domínguez. Se les formó un consejo de guerra sumarísimo y fueron pasados por las armas.

"Los cadáveres se encuentran en el Hospital Militar de esta capital y corresponden a las personas siguientes: General de división Francisco R. Serrano, generales Carlos A. Vidal, Miguel



A. Peralta y Daniel L. Peralta, señores licenciado Rafael Martínez de Escobar, Alonso Capetillo, Augusto Peña, Antonio Jáuregui, Ernesto Noriega Méndez, Octavio Almada, José Villa Arce, licenciado Otilio González, Enrique Monteverde, Jr., y ex general Carlos V. Ariza." (Excélsior, Tuesday, October 4, 1927, p. 1)





## Appendix E

The following is intended to illustrate J. A. Reyes' recourse to journalism in El automóvil gris as a means of enhancing his plot. Although Reyes frequently referred to Mexican and North American press reports throughout the novel, we have limited our references and commentary to his use of reports relating to the exploits of the "Banda del Automóvil Gris".

The end of the criminal activities of the 'Banda' was signalled by newspaper reports, supposedly read by Modesta Díaz, one of the characters of El automóvil gris:

"Poco antes de salir de México [en marzo de 1916] vimos en los periódicos que habían sido aprehendidos Angel García Chao, María del Carmen Frederick, Juan Preciado, Manuel León, Luis Hernández, Angel Fernández, Bernardo Quintero, Santiago Rizca, Francisco González, M. Mercedes Gutiérrez, Ernestino Ortega, Aurora Cuéllar, Luis Lara, Joaquín María Rodríguez Rivera, José Guevara, Julián García, María Cruz Vivanco, Isabel de León, Rafael Mercadante, Enrique Díaz Velasco, Leopoldo Vallarta, Luis Ocampo y Angela Agis." (El automóvil gris, p. 137)

Although we have not been able to corroborate this account in newspaper reports of the time, the facts themselves are correct. Criminal proceedings were instituted against the members of the group, and as a result some of them were executed on December 19, 1916. Others were held for further questioning. One of these, Rafael Mercadante, was reportedly about to make a full confession when he was murdered in the prison in Cuautla in December 1918. Reyes sheds more light on the matter by quoting an unspecified newspaper article of the period:

"[Afirmo el Gral. González que] cuando de las constancias procesales se comprobó la responsabilidad grave de muchos de los de la banda, y las autoridades militares comenzaron a ejecutar a los criminales, yo reparé en la circunstancia de que no era cuerdo que fueron fusilados todos, sin que se practicaran más eficaces y minuciosas investigaciones; tanto para el esclarecimiento del crimen, como para evitar que el público pensara que se hacía aquello para borrar toda huella, como antes expresé." (El automóvil gris, p. 141)

Further developments in the investigation were summarized in the novel on the basis of reports from the daily México Nuevo. "La justicia carrancista siguió dizque haciendo las averiguaciones del caso. México Nuevo, diario que se publicaba entonces en la ciudad de México, llegó a decir que la banda del Automóvil Gris estuvo bajo la dirección intelectual del general Juan Mérito, e hizo alusión a las alhajas que lució una artista, María Conesa, la noche de su beneficio, y que eran de las robadas por la banda del Automóvil Gris, pero nada se hizo por entonces y sólo tres años después fué llamada a declarar la tiple mencionada." (El automóvil gris, p. 142)

In order to relate all the details of the pursuit of justice against the members of the 'Banda', José Reyes, through his





protagonist, Modesta Díaz, made increasingly frequent use of contemporary newspaper reports. This technique was, at times, based on direct quotation, and at others on unspecified references to recent information in the newspapers. Typically, almost all the information on the scandal resulting from the death of Rafael Mercadante was based on journalistic sources.

In the middle of December 1918, Modesta Díaz reported that, "Al día siguiente [de su visita a la prisión] los periódicos publicaron la noticia de que Mercadante se había suicidado tomando un tósigo" (El automóvil gris, p. 165). In reality, news of Mercadante's death, reported as suicide, first appeared in the newspapers of the capital on December 22, 1918 (cf. El Universal, pp. 1 and 5).

"Los periódicos del día 1 de enero de 1919 rectificaron la noticia del suicidio y decían que Mercadante había sido envenenado por José Fernández, otro de los presos por el Automóvil Gris, el cual adquirió el veneno en la fotografía de la Penitenciaría.... El delito se había cometido entre él y González Zambrano, también de la banda del 'Automóvil Gris'." (El automóvil gris, p. 165). From issues of El Universal contemporary with events, it is clear that this news was not reported until January 8th (El Universal, pp. 1, 6). The January 9th edition clarified that the poison had been administered in Mercadante's food by José Fernández (pp. 1 and 2).

"...la prensa capitalina continuó publicando pormenores del escandaloso asunto del Automóvil Gris.

El 3 de enero [de 1919] Oviedo comunicó a un reportero de un diario capitalino que estaba dispuesto a revelar todos los pormenores de los crímenes del Automóvil Gris y aseguró que Mercadante había sido envenenado por una mano extraña y no por los presos a quienes se achacaba el delito" (El automóvil gris, p. 166). The first newspaper indication that Mercadante was about to make revelations concerning the criminal activities of the 'Banda' appeared in El Universal on December 25, 1918 (p. 6). The same information was reiterated on December 30 (p. 1 and 6) and again throughout the month of January, 1919, in the same newspaper.

"Por fortuna mis temores de que Oviedo fuera a revelar algo que me comprometiera desaparecieron el día 9 de enero [de 1919] por la mañana, al leer en los periódicos que el negro Brown, un penitenciado, había asesinado a dicho Oviedo en la misma Penitenciaría, cosiéndolo a puñaladas....

Al día siguiente acabaron a disiparse mis temores al enterarme por los mismos diarios que José Fernández y Fidel González Zambrano...se habían fugado de la prisión" (El automóvil gris, p. 167). The actual report of Oviedo's death appeared in El Universal on December 30, 1918 (pp. 1 and 6). Subsequent information on Wednesday, January 1, 1919 detailed how he had been killed by Brown, while Brown's deposition was reported on January 3rd. The reports of the escape made by Fernández and González Zambrano appeared on January 7, 1919 (cf. El Universal, pp. 1 and 6)

"...un día publicaron los periódicos que había sido





aprehendido en El Paso, Texas [el general Mérito]...

Con ese motivo se dijo en la prensa mexicana que el general Mérito se había fugado de México, temeroso de ser perseguido por el asunto del Automóvil Gris..." (El automóvil gris, p. 168).

The editions of El Universal on January 21 and 22 reported that Mérito was in fact in Texas, where he had arrived on January 17, but mentioned nothing of his having been arrested.

From Texas, Mérito sent a written defence of his activities, to be published in the Mexican newspapers of the capital, a letter which appeared on the first page of El Universal on Saturday, January 25, 1919 [edition No. 829]: "Entonces envié al diario mexicano La Prensa, de San Antonio, Texas, la siguiente carta... El Universal publica esta carta en su No. 829." The letter was reproduced in full in the newspapers, and offered Mérito's justification of his own activities, while implicating the 'Presbote' Patiño in the affair.

"El Lic. Patiño, Presbote que fué del Cuerpo de Ejército de Oriente desde 1915 hasta que se inauguró el 1 de mayo de 1917 el período constitucional...contestó en el acto por medio de otra [carta] dirigida a El Universal y concebida en los siguientes términos:

"En el número 829 del acreditado diario El Universal, se publica una carta que el señor general Juan Mérito, con fecha 17 de los corrientes y en la población de Laredo, Texas, le dirigió al periódico intitulado La Prensa, que ve la luz pública en San Antonio, Texas.

"Prescindiendo de las apreciaciones más o menos agresivas del señor general Juan Mérito hacia mi personalidad ... [ and the narrative continued with Patiño's extensive letter of defence]" (El automóvil gris, pp. 171-174). The aforementioned letter, exactly as quoted by Reyes, appeared in El Universal on Sunday, January 26, 1919 (p. 6).

Subsequent written exchanges continued to appear in the dailies of the capital, along with pertinent editorial commentary. Modesta Díaz asserted, "El Universal y Excelsior fueron los diarios que trataron la cuestión con mayor seriedad e imparcialidad" (El automóvil gris, p. 176). This was in keeping with the nature of both newspapers, since they strenuously upheld the principles of sound, informative reporting.





## Appendix F

A comparison of the newspaper extracts concocted by Jorge Gram in Héctor with the actual, contemporary accounts, reveals the sympathies of the novelist. In Héctor, the 'cristeros' are motivated by noble, Christian and revolutionary ideals in their attack on the passenger train near Guadalajara, but do not commit any atrocities. Consequently, Gram endeavours to show that the official Government reports are a deceitful attempt to discredit the 'cristero' movement:

...el Gobierno de Calles, decepcionado de imponer silencio sobre el golpe magistral de los católicos armados, para desfigurarlos horriblemente y calumniarlos, dio a la prensa de todo el mundo el siguiente estupendo boletín:

"Un grupo de fanáticos encabezados por el Cura de Tucumán y el Obispo de Guadalajara, atacó el tren de pasajeros que iba a la ciudad de Guadalajara. Doscientos pasajeros indefensos fueron quemados vivos encerrados en los carros. En toda la historia de nuestras guerras civiles no ha habida hecatombe tan salvaje como la dirigida por el Cura y El Obispo infidentes al grito espeluznante de '¡Viva Cristo Rey!' " (Héctor, p. 272).

The official government bulletin of the attack, as reproduced in the national newspapers, was, in fact, the first-hand military report submitted to the President of Mexico by General Jaime Carillo, the commanding officer of the region in which the attack occurred. His communiqué, given out to all newspapers as the official news release, stated:

UNA GAVILLA DE BANDOLEROS DE LAS ORGANIZADAS POR EL EPISCOPADO CATOLICO Y DIRIGIDA PERSONALMENTE POR LOS PRESBITEROS VEGA PEDRAZA Y ANGULO, ASALTO EL TREN QUE SALIO ANTEAYER TARDE DE GUADALAJARA PARA ESTA CAPITAL, QUEMANDO TODOS LOS CARROS Y PASANDO A CUCHILLO A LA MAYOR PARTE DE LOS PASAJEROS DE SEGUNDA, MUCHOS DE LOS CUALES FUERON QUEMADOS VIVOS DENTRO DE LOS MISMOS CARROS DEL TREN. (Excelsior, April 21, 1927)

At the end of this communiqué, the editorialist for Excelsior appended his own brief commentary:

Como único comentario a tan dolorosos sucesos, queremos hacer notar al pueblo sensato de la República, y muy especialmente a las clases menesterosas, a las que pertenecen los pasajeros de segunda, que tan bárbaramente fueron quemados vivos por esta gavilla clerical, la clase de nivel moral que tienen los que quieren constituirse en directores espirituales de nuestra nación y apoderarse del poder, cosa que, por otra parte, no es de extrañar, pues sólo se trata de una repetición exacta de los





procedimientos que siempre ha usado la Iglesia Católica, desde la Inquisición hasta nuestros días. (p. 1)

Condemnation of the attack did not come only from the Government, but from civilian survivors of the combat as well. On April 22, 1927, El Universal published the following eye-witness account of the event.

EL ASALTO AL TREN DE GUADALAJARA

EL LIC. MESTRE NOS DESCRIBE LA HECATOMBE

No cree que tenga precedente en la historia de los atentados ferrocarrileros. La terrible impresión del ataque.

El señor licenciado D. Eduardo Mestre, testigo presencial del asalto al tren de Guadalajara, consumado el martes por una partida rebelde, nos envía bajo su firma el siguiente relato:

"El ataque que sufrió el tren de Guadalajara...no creo que tenga precedente en la historia de los atentados ferrocarrileros en México, tanto por las terribles penas que sufrieron los pasajeros durante tres mortales horas, cuanto por el enorme número de víctimas inocentes que hubo que lamentar."

[En seguida describe el asalto, las acciones, los sufrimientos y varias escenas conmovedoras. Termina con esta evaluación:]

"Aquella espantosa tragedia, prescindiendo de filiaciones políticas y creencias religiosas, será condenada ante las almas honradas, como merece reprobación cuanto es contrario a los sagrados principios de la humanidad."

(pp. 1 and 6)







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